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Public market continues to be subsidized in 2017. PAGE 5

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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75¢

Retirees start getting checks

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI government has already released $3.5 million intended for retirees or their beneficiaries—part of the more than $40 million revenue allocated under Public Law 19-75 or the supplemental budget. Gov. Ralph DLG Torres signed it into law last week.

PL 19-75, introduced as House Bill 19-212 by Rep. Antonio Sablan (Ind-Saipan), appropriates $40,967,307.88 for several government agencies and programs.

The Department of Finance had already transferred the money to the Settlement Fund, which would then be equally distributed to more than 3,000 former public servants or their

See RETIREES on Page 4

Susupe fire displaces construction workers

DEREK GERSONDE

A firefighter sprays water at a semi-concrete apartment on Tupak Street corner Tokcha Avenue in Susupe that was engulfed in fire late Thursday afternoon. No one was injured but the blaze displaced many construction workers.

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A fire of unknown cause burned a semi-concrete apartment on Tupak Street corner Tokcha Avenue in Susupe, displacing several, mostly construction workers, on Thursday afternoon.

No one was reported injured in the blaze or was given treatment for medical complaints, according to Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services spokesman Derek Gersonde.

Some residents told *Saipan Tribune* that the blaze wouldn't have

See FIRE on Page 4

Man with ATM skimming devices gets prison sentence

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

» Defense says defendant only a mule

The federal court has handed down a six-month prison sentence against a man who was indicted for allegedly concealing ATM skimming devices in his luggage.

Xiaolin Yang was given credit for time served.

Upon serving his sentence, Yang, a Chinese national, will be immediately deported from the CNMI and, at the same time, placed on supervised release for a year.

Yang was ordered to perform 50 hours of community service and pay a $100 special assess-

See MAN on Page 4

Feds to cover 100 pct. of Soudelor hazard mitigation

President Obama has decided that the federal government will cover 100 percent of the hazard mitigation grant program available to the Commonwealth as a result of Typhoon Soudelor last year. The President amended his major disaster declaration for the storm on Wednesday last week.

"The President's decision will make it all the more possible for us to prepare to resist future storms," said Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP). "I thank President Obama for this Christmas gift to the Marianas."

Hazard mitigation grant funds are usually available on a 75/25 federal/local cost-share basis. Last week's decision means the Commonwealth

See FEDS on Page 4

CHRISTMAS IN THE MARIANAS
First lady Diann Torres and Santa Claus visit the Garapan Elementary School, Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School, Tanapag Middle School, and Koblerville Elementary School in the run-up to Christmas Day in the Marianas.

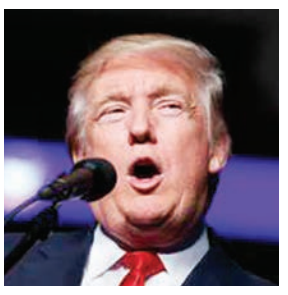
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

NOTICE

There will be no issue of *Saipan Tribune* on Jan. 2, 2017.

Happy New Year!

INSIDE



NATION
Donald Trump says he will dissolve his charitable foundation before taking office.

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ASIA
A powerful typhoon that spoiled Christmas Day in parts of the Philippines.

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LIFE & STYLE
George Michael's moment of liberation followed what seemed at first to be a time of deep humiliation.

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SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

Lawyer: Bridge Capital LLC creates most of LLCs in NMI

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Anaks Investors LLC is a limited liability company whose sole function and purpose is to hold fee simple title to real properties that are in reality owned by Bridge Capital LLC, according to lawyer Jennifer Dockter.

Dockter, who is counsel for Anaks Ocean View Hill Saipan Homeowner's Association Ltd., pointed out that as alleged in Anaks Investors LLC's complaint against the Homeowner's Association, Anaks Investors is an LLC owned 100 percent by Allen Perez, a former employee of Bridge Capital.

Anaks Investors LLC has filed an Article 12 lawsuit against the Homeowner's Association and the Manuel S. Luise P. Villagomez family trust. Attorney Daniel Guidotti, counsel for Anaks Investors, is also former counsel for Bridge Capital. Guidotti asked the Superior Court to declare that the lease of land where Anaks is located is void because it violates Article 12.

Article 12 section 1 of the CNMI Constitution restricts land ownership in the CNMI to "persons of Northern Marianas Descent."

On Dec. 9, 2015, Anaks Investors LLC made an offer to the trust to purchase for $1,973,200 the trust's interest in lot EA 129-R1 in Puerto

See LAWYER on Page 4

Tourism Topics
A weekly update from the Marianas Visitors Authority
Tourism is everybody's business.
Saipan Tinian Rota
HAFA ADAI & TIROW WAY

"Marianas-chan"

In its quest to find its "Marianas-chan" (Marianas child) to help promote the Northern Mariana Islands in Japan, Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA) is offering a $1,000 cash prize to the winner of auditions on Jan. 7, 2017. Contestants must register before the auditions, and the deadline to register is Dec. 30, 2016.

"Marianas-chan" will be featured in various MVA marketing and promotional activities in 2017, beginning in February. In addition to the $1,000 cash prize, travel expenses and a stipend will be provided to "Marianas-chan" and their parent or guardian for promotional activities held in Japan and the NMI.

The competition is open to children ages 4-6. Applicants must reside in the Northern Mariana Islands and be a U.S. citizen. Eligibility requirements and an application are available at www.mymarianas.com or at the MVA offices in Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. "Marianas-chan" will visit Japan to promote tourism and make television appearances, and his or her image will be issued in promotional material and merchandising.

Interested contestants from Tinian and Rota are invited to submit an application with a 1-2 minute video of the contestant to info@mymarianas.com for call back to the Jan. 7 audition in Saipan. For further details, download a Marianas-chan application at www.mymarianas.com or call the MVA at 1.670.664.3200/01.

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MAYOR DAVID M. APATANG

Early holiday gifts for caregivers, cancer survivors

Caregivers and cancer survivors were treated to early Christmas presents during the Commonwealth Cancer Association's monthly meeting last Thursday at the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

The event, scheduled from 5:30pm to 8pm at the Hyatt's Chamolinian Room, was just one of the many services the CCA offers throughout the year. Guests were treated to free refreshments and raffle prizes in celebration of the holiday season.

CCA is a community-based nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to promoting cancer awareness and prevention, providing patient support services, and serving as the liaison and advocate for cancer issues in the Commonwealth and the region.

The CCA was first established on 2002. Its programs are supported by corporations, families, and individuals.

"Cancer is a terrible thing. With all the worrying and depression, this meeting helps everyone come together and focus on how to move on with their lives as happily as possible," said Juan L. Babauta, CCA program manager.

Maria Taitano Salinas, a cancer survivor said, "I didn't realize there were this many cancer survivors on island until I joined this meeting. It's so nice to have people around that fully understand what you're going through, it makes you want to open up."

Salinas is a breast cancer survivor for 23 years now.

"It was a really terrible experience but that's all over now. All I want to do is enjoy my life as much as possible with the people I care about, " Salinas said.

The monthly meetings are all possible through contributions from the Comprehensive Cancer Control Program as well as the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. All gifts at the event were made possible thanks to the Legislature and other organizations.

"We would like to extend our sincerest appreciation, on behalf of CCA, to all businesses [donors] for the great donations prizes/gifts to the survivors and caregivers," Babauta said. ***(Michael T. Santos)***

MICHAEL T. SANTOS

Participants pose for a group photo along with the event's program manager Juan L. Babauta, far left, during the Commonwealth Cancer Association's monthly support meeting held in Hyatt Regency Saipan in Garapan on Dec. 22.

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Calvo supports legalizing pot for recreational use

HAGATNA, Guam (AP)—Guam Gov. Eddie Calvo has proposed legalizing recreational marijuana on the island, with heavy taxation.

Calvo announced the plan Monday, just a week after he vetoed a bill that would allow medical marijuana patients to grow their pot at home. Calvo had cited concerns about the cost of regulating residential grow operations, *The Pacific Daily News* reported.

The governor turned his focus this week to recreational marijuana, which he said could generate tax revenue to fund public safety and education.

"I want us to look at how states navigated into recreational marijuana. Let's figure it out and then tax the heck out of it and use those taxes to help fund our hospital, public safety and education," Calvo said in a written statement.

The bill vetoed by Calvo last week requires residents to obtain a permit and have their homes subject to routine inspection by law enforcement and public health officials.

"Unless the means of how the regulation of home cultivation is to be funded or staffed is identified, the anticipated enforcement of Bill 344 will impose new and different duties upon our health and law enforcement agencies that will deplete their already strained resources," Calvo's veto message states. "Bill 344 places a huge burden on our public health and safety which I cannot permit."

Senators had approved the bill in a 8-7 vote earlier this month, which means the veto could stand. At least 10 votes are required to override Calvo's veto.

FIRE

From Page 1

engulfed the entire apartment if firefighters immediately sprayed water onto the affected unit.

"Two fire trucks came, but there was no water," a resident said.

A neighbor said they first noticed smoke coming out of one of the apartment units in the back, but they thought it was only rain.

Neighbors said most of those who occupy the apartment are Filipino construction workers who weren't able to save any of their belongings as they were either at work or on their way home when the fire broke out.

A certain Josie owns or manages the apartment unit, some residents said.

Firefighters were able to prevent the fire from transferring to two to three adjacent houses.

DFEMS first received a report about a structure fire in Susupe at 5:23pm and firefighters and all other on-duty personnel from Susupe, Garapan, and Kagman fire stations responded to the scene.

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. then came and shut the power and activated the hydrants in the area. The Commonwealth Ports Authority-Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting Unit assisted with the use of their water tanker. American Red Cross personnel assisted the affected families.

DFEMS spokesman Gersonde said firefighters controlled the blaze at 6:33pm.

Gersonde said preliminary investigation conducted by arson investigators revealed that the structure was a semi-concrete dwelling with 12 rooms, 10 of them occupied.

Gersonde said the scene has been secured to allow arson investigators to process the scene in the morning under better lighting conditions.

"Updates will be released when they are available," he said.

MAN

From Page 1

ment fee.

Assistant U.S. attorney James Benedetto had recommended a sentence of six months—at the low end of the sentencing guidelines. Benedetto also recommended Yang's deportation and forfeiture of items seized from Yang.

Attorney Mark B. Hanson, the court-appointed counsel for Yang, recommended a six-month prison term with credit for time served. Yang has been in custody for nearly eight months.

Hanson said that Yang was essentially used as a mule, transporting the equipment to Saipan and handing it to a third party.

Hanson said Yang's parents passed away when he was still a child and he was pressed into work early in life and completed only fifth grade.

Hanson said Yang is married and they have a son who is 10. The lawyer said the defendant, while in jail, has been unable to contact his wife and son, who are both in China.

Hanson said Yang does not have any history of substance abuse and has no criminal record.

Yang pleaded guilty to transporting the device-making equipment from China to Saipan.

Hanson said that Yang's involvement in the scheme is relatively minor.

The indictment charged Yang in federal court with one count of conspiracy to traffic or possess device-making equipment. He pleaded guilty last Sept. 9.

The indictment said ATM skimming device includes a device fastened over the top of the factory-installed card reader on an ATM machine, which together with a small hidden camera, is used to illegally capture account information contained on the magnetic stripe on the back of an ATM or debit card as well as a customer's personal identification number.

The captured account information is later transferred onto a counterfeit or fictitious ATM or debit card, and the captured PIN is used to make unauthorized withdrawals from the legitimate customer's account.

The indictment also contains notice of forfeiture.

The property, which was seized from Yang, include two card readers, four pinhole cameras and attached hardware, one iPhone 6, one Lenovo laptop computer, one Toshiba external hard drive, four 3.7 volt battery packs, $1,000 cash, and 1,209 Chinese RMB.

According to the indictment, beginning on April 21, 2016, and continuing through April 28, 2016, Yang conspired with persons to possess two ATM skimming devices and four pinhole cameras.

Yang brought the equipment from China to Saipan on April 28, 2016.

FBI special agents arrested Yang last April 29 shortly after U.S. District Court for the NMI Magistrate Judge Heather L. Kennedy issued an arrest warrant upon the U.S. government's filing of a complaint charging him with illegal possession of device-making equipment.

According to FBI special agent Haejun Park in his affidavit, Yang arrived on Saipan aboard Asiana Airlines from Hong Kong via Incheon last April 28.

Park said during immigration processing by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Yang acted suspiciously so he was required to undergo additional screening.

Park said during this additional screening, ATM skimming devices were found inside Yang's luggage.

The FBI investigated the skimming devices that were discovered earlier in April on two ATM machines at First Hawaiian Bank in Oleai.

Last April 9, the FBI released 10 photos of individuals wanted by the FBI for questioning in connection with the electronic thefts from FHB accounts held by Saipan residents.

FHB stated that card skimming through their ATMs was believed to be the cause of the unauthorized transactions made in various FHB accounts.

RETIREES

From Page 1

beneficiaries no later than Thursday, Dec. 29, due to different criteria and the coming holidays.

The amount distributed is the gross amount; recipients will be responsible for paying the tax on their bonuses on April 15, 2017.

Torres said the government continues to prioritize providing quality public service to the community, especially retired civil servants. "Our government believes in making sure its former public servants are taken cared of, for their years of hard work and dedication to the community."

"We are committed to ensuring that a fiscally responsible funding mechanism is put in place so that our retirees and their beneficiaries can continue to receive their hard-earned pensions. We understand that there is so much more we can do as our economy continues to grow."

The money was part of the government's revenue collected from fees paid by the lone casino licensee on Saipan.

"Because of our revitalized economy, I am pleased that we are able to provide $3,500,000 as a bonus to our retirees and their beneficiaries this year," Torres added.

He said it has been the government's goal to help improve the lives of everyone who call the CNMI their home. "It is my hope we continue this work of progress together as we press forward in the coming year to create a more efficient government."

Finance Secretary Larrisa Larson said that one of the parameters they used is that a surviving spouse without qualified children would receive an equal share of the bonus like the retiree.

"A surviving spouse with minor children and/or children over 18 and under 22 years of age who are full-time students at an accredited educational institution will also equally share the bonus based on what is determined to be a retiree's share," Larson said.

Surviving minor child or children over 18 years old who are full-time students in an accredited educational institution and under the supervision of a legal guardian would also equally share the bonus based on the retirees' share.

NMI Settlement Fund administrator Lillian Pangelinan said that retirees will receive $1,230.66 each—the same amount of all survivors, either spouse or children, of a deceased retiree. "For example, if you are a surviving spouse with two minor children, the three of you will receive $410.22 each."

FEDS

From Page 1

will not have to use any local funds.

The President had previously allowed for a 90/10 cost-share for all categories of disaster grants provided under the federal Stafford Act. This included grants for the emergency work and repair and replacement of facilities damaged by the Typhoon Soudelor.

To date the Federal Emergency Management Administration has provided $49.7 million in grants to individuals and the Commonwealth to recover from Soudelor. Small Business Administration disaster loans top $24.3 million. ***(Office of the Delegate)***

LAWYER

From Page 2

Rico, Saipan, where the Anaks Ocean View Hill Saipan is situated.

Anaks Ocean View Hill is a condominium-style residential development that consists of 131 residential units plus common areas such as a community center, roads, parking spaces, swimming pools, tennis courts, and landscaped areas.

In the Homeowner's Association's opposition to Anaks Investors LLC's motion for preliminary injunction, Dockter said Bridge Capital is at the very least the lender in this transaction but likely has a much more active role in Anaks Investors and has interfered with the rights of other property owners though its owners and employees.

For example, in this case, Dockter said, Bridge Capital has interfered with the homeowner's association's ability to get loan financing by writing threatening letters promising to sue banks who might lend money to the homeowner's association.

The lawyer said at least one current Bridge Capital employee has tried to interfere with the homeowner's acquisition of the property by writing and signing a letter on Anak Investors letterhead.

Dockter disclosed that Bridge Capital has created most of the LLC's in the CNMI so that Perez, a Northern Marianas descent, can hold fee simple title to property on behalf of Bridge Capital, which is a non-NMD.

Dockter said the LLCs don't actually do any real business, they just hold title to property to circumvent Article 12.

Dockter said Anaks Investors is not a corporation and cannot hold long-term interest in real property and the CNMI Constitution precludes Anaks Investors from obtaining the preliminary injunction that they seek.

Dockter said corporations, if certain requirements are met, may hold long-term interests in real property in the CNMI.

Docker said corporation and limited liability company are not interchangeable because they are very different legal entities governed by distinct laws, each having distinct characteristics.

Further, she said, pursuant to the plain language of the CNMI Constitution, there are specific requirements a corporation must meet to hold long-term interests in property.

Dockter said as a great example of one of the many important distinctions between corporations and LLC's, Anaks Investors LLC has a "member" who "owns 100 percent of Anaks Investors LLC's distributional interests."

Dockter said it is impossible to conclude that the framers intended to grant LLC's the authority to acquire long-term interests in real property because LLC's did not exist when the constitution was drafted.

Dockter said Anaks Investors LLC missed the irony of its allegations, especially given the quote from Article 12 Section 5 because Anaks Investors LLC is itself not an "Article 12 corporation," and is, in fact, not a corporation at all.

She said Anaks Investors LLC has no standing to bring the Article 12 lawsuit.

In Anaks Investors LLC's reply to defendant's opposition, Guidotti said the court should conclude that Anaks Investors LLC is an NMI descent that can own "permanent and long-term interests in real property."

Guidotti said although the CNMI Constitution does not expressly permit an LLC to hold a "permanent and long-term interest in real property," the court should nevertheless rule that LLCs may hold long-term interests in real property to the same extent that corporations are permitted to do so under Article 12 Section 5.

Guidotti said because Anaks Investors LLC has complied with all of the Article 12, section 5 requirements, Anaks Investors LLC should have the right to obtain "permanent and long-term interests in real property" just like individual and corporate NMDs.

Presiding Judge Robert C. Naraja heard and placed under advisement Anaks Investors LLC's motion for preliminary injunction last week.

Public market continues to be subsidized in 2017

The Garapan Public Market will continue to be supported by the CNMI government in the coming year, according to Gov. Ralph DLG Torres.

When asked if the CNMI government will continue to subsidize some of the expenses of the Garapan Public Market, Torres replied: "Yes. I want to give opportunity for the [market] to continue the program.

The Garapan Public Market was forced to shut down in the wake of Typhoon Soudelor in August 2015.

Since its reopening last April 2016, the market has been attracting customers as well as farmers, to conduct business with the market, which is why Torres is so keen on continuing to support of the market.

"So far, it is working well," said Torres. "We've had some challenges, but we need to continue this and not give up on our farmers."

Torres said that that Commonwealth farmers should be working together instead of competing with one another to promote agriculture on Saipan.

"Each organization has its own goals. At the end of the day, I support all farmers. I support the Sabalu market, I support the Garapan Public Market. I hope that some day we can join them together because in unity we are a lot stronger," said Torres.

Torres even contributes some of his own produce, but only when the market is short on supplies.

CNMI Farmers Cooperative Association director Ramon B. Camacho calls for unity among farmers.

"2017 is exciting. I ask each and every one of you to be hardworking and produce so that our people can patronize the market. Let's continue to work together as a team, regardless of who you are or where you are from, the market is the answer," said Camacho. ***(Erwin Encinares)***

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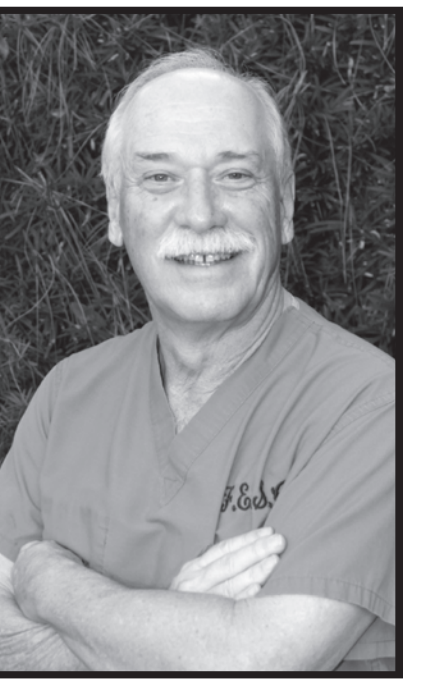

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to the Open Government Act, Governor Ralph DLG. Torres, and Lt. Governor Victor B. Hocog, through the Commonwealth Casino Commission ("Commission"), hereby give notive that the Commission has scheduled an Emergency Meeting on Wednesday, December 28, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library (Technology Room) in Susupe, Saipan.

The following Agenda will be discussed:

I. PRELIMINARIES:
A. Call to Order
B. Roll Call
C. Adoption of Agenda

II. REPORTS:
A. Report by the Chairman
B. Report by the Executive Director

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

IV. OLD BUSINESS:

V. NEW BUSINESS:
A. IPI Compliance Committee - CCC Order

VI. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS: Updates from IPI
B. Compliance with Title 31 - Anti-Money Laundering Requirements
C. Workforce Plan: Personnel AML Training

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION:
A. Report by the Legal Counsel
B. Imperial Pacific International (CNMI), LLC ("IPI"): Compliance Issues
C. Casino Surveillance and Monitoring

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a)(7) and Section 13(c), the Commission may vote to meet in Executive Session. In addition, the Commission may extend its official meeting for another day or more if necessary.

/s/ Juan M. Sablan
Chairman

‘EIS is next for military’

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Drafting the environment impact statement would be the U.S. military’s next move after the CNMI government and the U.S. Air Force signed the record of decision to use Tinian for their planned divert activities and other exercises.

An EIS is a prepared document describing the effects of proposed military activities on people, the natural, and physical environment. The EIS is under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, which requires certain actions that would have an impact on the quality of the human environment.

The ROD was signed during Gov. Ralph DLG Torres’ meeting with U.S. Pacific Command Deputy Commander Lt. Gen. Anthony Crutchfield in Hawaii after the 75th commemoration of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

The meeting was part of the ongoing discussion on 902 issues, particularly the proposed military buildup in the CNMI that included a live-fire training facility as stated in the Commonwealth Joint Military Training.

A live-fire training facility is one of the issues that nonprofit organizations are protesting against, concerned as they are about the short- and long-term effects of the proposed activity on the CNMI.

Torres said they have not yet discussed what types of structures the military will build. “There’s no discussions yet but the initial thing to do is draft an EIS. And then look at the feasibility of them having the airfield. Once that’s done, they are going to go to the blueprint as to what to do at the airport.”

Torres said the ROD signing was the result of successful negotiations between both parties involved. “Through good faith and negotiation, and good working relationship with Gen. Crutchfield, they signed the ROD to move forward with the Tinian divert airfield. [They] signed the divert airfield only for Tinian.”

“It is a great success for all of us, because when they came they wanted the Saipan airfield. But we said no and reiterated only Tinian. They came back with the hybrid [proposal] and we said no again. We looked at the local leadership [Tinian and Aguiguan Legislative Delegation] together with Mayor [Joey San Nicolas] and they supported only Tinian,” added Torres.

Torres has also reviewed the 902 report, which was already sent to President Barack Obama for final review.

The final report of the four rounds of the 902 talks has the detailed information regarding the CNMI’s concerns regarding various issues that are affecting the Commonwealth.

UNITED STATES
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

NOTICE OF COUNCIL MEETING

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 12, the CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities hereby gives notice that it will hold its 2nd Quarter General Membership Meeting on December 29, 2016, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Pacific Islands Club - Napu Room.

AGENDA

I. Call to Order
II. Roll Call
III. Review and Adoption of Agenda of December 29, 2016
IV. Review and Adoption of Meeting Minutes of September 15, 2016

V. Action Items
a. Ratify/Approve CDD’s FY 2016 Annual Report
b. Ratify/Approve DD Basic Grant FY 2017 Budget – Partial Award
c. Ratify/Approve AT Act Program Grant FY 2017 Budget – Partial Award

VI. Reports
a. Chairperson
b. State Plan Committee Chairperson
c. Fiscal Committee Chairperson
d. Executive Director

VII. OLD Business
a. New Membership Orientation
b. February – Transition Conference
c. Emergency Preparedness Focus Group

VIII. New Business
a. Office of the Public Auditor’s Code of Ethics Presentation
b. VOICES of the CNMI – Tinian Chapter Update

XI. Miscellaneous
XII. Next Meeting - January 2017
XIII. Adjournment

Note: *Pursuant to P.L. 8-41, Section 13(a) 7, the Council may vote to meet in Executive Session.*

In accordance to the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals who wish to attend this meeting and require special accommodations are requested to call the Council 5 days in advance at 664-7000. The Public is welcome to submit written or 3 minutes oral comments regarding the agenda above.

/s/ Efren Nicholas
Chairperson

This ad was paid for by funds from the DD Basic Grant Part A (Administrative)

FIESTA Resort & SPA SAIPAN
A TanHoldings Company

Invites highly qualified workers to join our Fiesta Resort and Spa, Saipan Team for the following vacant position:

Guest Relations Supervisor

Responsibilities & Duties:
- Operate front desk to include greeting guests, performing guest transactions, operating the front office system, answering the phone and ordering front desk supplies.
- Review shift reports daily and perform follow up as necessary.
- Handle the responsibilities of managing the guest relation activities of the hotel.
- Responds as well as solves different complaints of guests.
- Inform Front Office Manager/ Director of Rooms of all safety and security concerns of property, guests and associates, including OSHA, General Liability and Workers’ Compensation cases.
- Maximizing the sales by providing the guests with additional information regarding its products and services and to make sure that the guests are satisfied.
- Ensure high levels of quality and service in front desk area.
- Perform all other related duties and special projects as requested and/or assigned.

Qualifications/Required Skills:
- High School Diploma or equivalent.
- Highly prefer 2 years experience in front office in a supervisory capacity and preferably from a full service hotel/resort.
- Must be able to supervise and coordinate the activities of guest relations workers to ensure that guests on vacation or business travel have a pleasant experience, while also ensuring the establishment is run efficiently and profitably.
- Must be proficient in computer software applications.
- Strong customer service and time management skills are essential.
- Must be able to work flexible schedule including early morning hours, holidays, weekends and nights.
- Ability to stand and move throughout the front office continuously to perform essential job functions.

Interested applicants may send their resumes to fiesta_hr@fiestasaipan.com.
To be considered, applications must be submitted not later than December 30, 2016.
Background checks and pre-employment drug testing will be required prior to employment.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION TO BID
CUC-ITB-17-015

SALE AND REMOVAL OF SCRAP MATERIALS FROM THE WAREHOUSE

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is inviting interested individuals and firms to bid on CUC Scrap materials located in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Bid Package may be obtained at no charge upon registration at the CUC, Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Dandan, Saipan, between 7:30 AM to 11:30 AM and 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays.

One (1) original and One (1) copy must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **“CUC-ITB-17-015, CUC Sale & Removal of Scrap Materials from the Warehouse”** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 17, 2017**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

Bidders must sign a Waiver of Liability, removing CUC’s liability from claims resulting from violations relating to the removal and disposal of the scrap materials. CUC shall transfer and assign the scrap materials to the prospective bidder in an “As is, Where is” condition. By accepting the transfer and assignment, the bidder acknowledges that CUC has made no representation or warranties of the merchantability, quality, fitness, and condition of the scrap materials.

The scrap materials may be inspected by appointment only, between the hours of 9:00 AM thru 3:00 PM Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, by contacting CUC Warehouse Division at telephone no. 322-6585.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any defects in the said bids, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in the best interest of the CUC.

All inquiries must be submitted in writing no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on January 9, 2017, to Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, CUC Purchasing Technician for Procurement via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

GARY CAMACHO
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Officer

CDA wants to seize ex-first lady’s shares of stocks in 2 companies

The Commonwealth Development Authority is seeking a court order to authorize it to seize the property of former first lady Matilde V. Guerrero and the estate of late governor Lorenzo Iglecias De Leon Guerrero to satisfy a $1.3 million judgment, including interest and penalties.

CDA, through counsel Jennifer Dockter, asked the Superior Court to issue a writ of execution allowing it to seize Matilde Guerrero’s and the estate of Lorenzo Guerrero’s shares of stock in Saipan Stevedore Co. Inc. and in Saipan Shipping Co. Inc.

Lorenzo Guerrero, through estate administrator Matilde Guerrero, holds 10.58 shares in Saipan Stevedore Co. Inc. Matilde Guerrero has 10.4285 shares in Saipan Shipping Company Inc.

In her affidavit in support of CDA’s application for writ of execution, Dockter said that, on April 29, 2011, a deficiency judgment was granted in favor of CDA and against Matilde Guerrero and the estate of Lorenzo Guerrero in the total amount of $853,274.42.

Dockter said the defendants have failed to satisfy the judgment. Court records show that CDA extended a direct $122,129.42 loan to the Guerreros with 9 percent interest. ***(Ferdie dela Torre)***

Glow Walk, Run Or Wheel set

The VOICES of the CNMI in collaboration with Team Koka will be having its annual Glow Walk, Run Or Wheel on Dec. 28 starting at 5pm. This will be the fourth year since the Voices has been hosting this event. You still have time to register and the first 100 participants will receive a T-shirt and bag. Contact Jan Barcinas, Monika Diaz or Mikaela Diaz to register. ***(PR)***

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
Gabriel Hueso Borinaga celebrated his first birthday on Dec. 21, 2016, at the Shirley’s Coffee Shop and Restaurant’s Susupe branch.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan loses only clown

Everyone was busy celebrating Christmas Day on Dec. 25 but the lone clown on Saipan was busy preparing all his belongings to depart the islands.

Reynaldo Gabriel, more commonly known as "Hapi D' Clown," set off on a new journey last Sunday morning.

The entertainer has been on island for more than 23 years but he felt that it was time to move on.

"I've basically grown up here, this place is a second home to me. I even got the chance to see so many of the kids I entertained grow up but I just think I've learned all I can from Saipan," said Gabriel. "I first moved to Saipan when I was really young. Thinking about things now, I didn't really feel like I did much and that there's so much more I could do."

Gabriel, when not entertaining kids at parties, worked as a crewmember at McDonald's Middle Road.

Joe Ayuyu Jr. manager of McDonald's Middle Road, said, "It was an honor working with him [Hapi] and we all just wish him the best of luck."

Gabriel recalled Anthony Pellegrino from Gino's Pizza first hiring him as a clown, having his career take off from there. He is now aiming for a professional hosting gig.

"That really was my start as a clown. I love just making a kid's day and being a clown really helped me do that," Gabriel said. "I have no intention of giving up my career as a clown, but I want to see where hosting can take me for now. I would like to thank all my friends, family, and former employers for taking such good care of me over the years. I will miss you all," Gabriel said.

Janet Mendaiyao, a resident, said, "That's so bad that Hapi is leaving! Actually, it's more of a bittersweet moment because we all want the best for him but the kids especially don't want to see him go." ***(Michael T. Santos)***

Reynaldo Gabriel, more commonly known as "Hapi D' Clown," has been working on Saipan for 23 years. Last at McDonald's Middle Road as a crewmember, he left the island on Christmas Day in pursuit of other opportunities.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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Kia Forte LX retail price $17,995.00 less 20% downpayment. Financing at 5.40% APR for 72 monthly payments of $234.53 or $108.25 per paycheck based on 26 pay periods per year. Total deferred payment $16,886.20.
Kia Soul LX retail price $18,995.00 less 20% downpayment. Financing at 5.40% APR for 72 monthly payments of $247.56 or $114.26 per paycheck based on 26 pay periods per year. Total deferred payment $17,824.32.

AG: PSS commissioner recused self from process

The appointment of Cynthia Deleon Guerrero as education commissioner is "legally sound and fully supported by the facts and the law," according to a report from the Office of the Attorney General addressed to the CNMI Board of Education.

Attorney General Edward Manibusan signed the letter to BOE chair Herman Guerrero, answering questions whether the appointment of Deleon Guerrero as Public School System commissioner amended the job vacancy announcement, also known as JVA; if Deleon Guerrero met eligibility requirements under the JVA; and if Deleon Guerrero recused herself from the hiring process.

In the report, Manibusan stated that Deleon Guerrero met all requirements to become PSS commissioner; she properly recused herself from the hiring process; and that BOE properly amended the JVA.

"Based on the review of the JVA application materials, Human Resources Offices documents, and internal communications, and applying the applicable law," wrote Manibusan, "it is clear that the [BOE] acted properly in [appointing] Deleon Guerrero as commissioner of Education."

Manibusan explained in the letter that Deleon Guerrero was qualified.

"Deleon Guerrero meets the statutory requirements because she has over five years experience as an education administrator, when either experience, standing alone, would suffice," wrote Manibusan.

"Deleon Guerrero also meets the higher requirements in the JVA because of her teaching and administration experience. The only way that Deleon Guerrero could be considered unqualified is if Northern Marianas College is not considered a school," he added.

Manibusan went on to explain that Deleon Guerrero recused herself from the selection process.

"Deleon Guerrero informed [BOE] of her intention to apply for the commissioner of Education position and recused herself from the hiring process at the [BOE's] Aug. 25, 2016 meeting," he wrote.

"When materials were accidentally sent to Deleon Guerrero, she immediately responded, cc'ing the BOE legal counsel and the assistant director of the Human Resources Office to reiterate the fact that she was recused," he added.

"Her recusal is further demonstrated by the fact that glaring typographical errors were made on the evaluation and assessment form of her application. This strongly suggests that she never even reviewed the files. If she had meddled in the hiring process, it is almost certain that these mistakes would have been corrected."

The BOE properly amended the JVA, which BOE had the discretion to determine the qualifications for the position as long as it followed the law, wrote Manibusan. ***(Erwin Encinares)***

Supreme Court grants motion to dismiss appeal

On Dec. 23, 2016, the Supreme Court issued its opinion in *Kalayaan, Inc. v. Chris G. Imbo*, 2016 MP 16, granting Chris G. Imbo's motion to dismiss Kalayaan, Inc.'s appeal.

In 2014, Kalayaan filed a complaint against Imbo for a breach of contract. Five-hundred and eighty-three days later, Kalayaan served Imbo the summons and complaint. Relying on NMI Rule of Civil Procedure 4(m), Imbo moved to dismiss the complaint for failure to timely serve, and his motion was granted by the trial court. Kalayaan appealed the dismissal, arguing that the trial court misapplied Rule 4(m), and refiled the complaint in the trial court.

Imbo moved to dismiss Kalayaan's appeal, arguing that the Supreme Court lacked jurisdiction because the trial court's order was not a final order, and because Kalayaan's appeal was mooted because the original complaint was refiled in the trial court.

Because the trial court relied on Rule 4(m) and dismissed the action, not merely the complaint, the Supreme Court found that the trial court's order was a final order and the high court did have jurisdiction to hear Kalayaan's appeal. However, because Kalayaan refiled the same complaint in the trial court, the Supreme Court determined that the issue was moot on appeal, noting a finding in favor of Kalayaan would "put Kalayaan where it stands now, with an exact duplicate of the case and complaint already proceeding in trial court." To do so, the high court found, would "be nonsensical." The high court thus granted Imbo's motion to dismiss on the grounds of mootness.

The Supreme Court's full opinion is available at http://www.cnmilaw.org/supreme16.html. ***(NMI Judiciary)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality
Division of Coastal Resources Management
P.O. Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-8300; Fax: (670) 664-8315
www.crm.gov.mp

Frank M. Rabauliman
Administrator

Frances A. Castro
Director, DCRM

AMENDMENT NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Division of Coastal Resources Management (DCRM) will be holding a public hearing for the Proper Grand (CNMI), LLC's proposed construction and operation of the Chalan Laulau Hotel & Dormitories (CRM permit application no. SMS-2017-X-003) and the Gualo Rai Hotel & Dormitories (CRM permit application no. SMS-2017-X-010) projects. The Chalan Laulau Hotel & Dormitories is located within an existing residential and business area. This project will rehabilitate two existing abandoned buildings, add a new building and a 3rd floor "canteen" building that can seat 39 guests with first and second level parking. The Gualo Rai Hotel and Dormitories will be constructed in Lower Gualo Rai within an existing "village commercial" and "rural" zone on the former "cockfight arena" property. This project will be demolishing the damaged cockfight arena to construct one new 3-story business hotel with 46 guest rooms, a restaurant seating up to 120 guests and three new 3-story dormitories with 348 beds.

A public hearing is scheduled for January 10, 2017, at 5:00PM at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center in Susupe, Saipan.

Written comments may be submitted to the DCRM Office, Suite 305, Gualo Rai Center, Middle Road, Gualo Rai, Saipan, or mailed to the Division of Coastal Resources Management, Caller Box 10007 or by fax at 664-8315. The project file is open for review and comments during regular business hours from 7:30 A.M. – 4:30 P.M, Monday thru Friday. All written and oral comments received by DCRM will be included as part of the permit application record and will be considered in any decisions concerning the proposed projects.

Please contact the DCRM at 664-8300/1 if you have any questions or would like to learn more about the Chalan Laulau Hotel & Dormitories and the Gualo Rai Hotel & Dormitories projects.

/s/ Frances A. Castro
Director
Division of Coastal Resources Management

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
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Frank M. Rabauliman
Administrator

Frances A. Castro
Director

NOTICE OF MEETING OF THE CRM AGENCY OFFICIALS

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Victor B. Hocog through the Division of Coastal Resources Management (DCRM) hereby give notice that a CRM Agency Officials meeting will be held on ***Tuesday, January 10, 2017 at 10:00 AM*** at the BECQ 2nd Floor Main Conference Room.

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
- a) Call to Order
- b) Roll Call
- c) Adoption of Agenda
- d) Adoption of December 1, 2016 Meeting Minutes

II. PERMIT APPLICATION
1. BEACH ROAD OCEAN VIEW RESORT
   CRM Permit Application No. SMS-2016-X-076
   - a. Project Introduction
   - b. Discussion with CRM Agency Officials and DCRM Director
   - c. Permit Application Status

III. OTHER MATTERS

IV. ADJOURNMENT

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony regarding the above agenda items. (NOTE: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a)(7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session).

/s/ **FRANCES A. CASTRO**
DCRM Director

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB17-SAR-057

SUBMISSION DATE: JANUARY 18, 2017 **TIME: 10:00A.M.**

"SECURITY SERVICES FOR THE OFFICE OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE & REHABILITATION FACILITY IN MARPI"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATION MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCURMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECTS ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ YVETTE R. SABLAN
SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE & REHABILITATION

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR OF P&S

DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Caller Box 10007, Gualo Rai Center, Saipan MP 96950
TEL. NO. 664-8300 FAX NO. 664-8315

NOTICE OF APPLICATION
As of December 27, 2016

THE FOLLOWING IS A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF COASTAL PERMIT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE DCRM OFFICE:

APPLICANT	DATE APPLICATION RECEIVED	APPLICATION PROJECT DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TYPE	STATUS
1. Cai Lingli dba. Proper Grand	11/3/2016 SMS-2017-X-010	Sugar King Hotel & Dormitory	Gualo Rai, Saipan	Major Siting	For Public Hearing 01/10/2016
2. Cai Lingli dba. Proper Grand	10/14/2016 SMS-2017-X-003	Chalan Laulau Dormitories	Chalan Laulau, Saipan	Major Siting	For Public Hearing 01/10/2016
3. Imperial Pacific International	11/14/2016 SS-2017-X-016	Habitat Restoration & Conservation Plan	Garapan, Saipan	Shoreline	Under Review-Extended*
4. Windsurfing Saipan Inc.	12/2/2016 SLRm-2012-X-059	Marine Sports Activities	Garapan, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Renewal, Approved 12/5/2016
5. Saipan Sea Ventures, Inc.	12/7/2016 SPI-2017-X-020	Drydock	South Seaplane Ramp	Ports & Industrial	Approved, 12/15/2016
6. Geraldine T. Cruz	12/5/2016 SWm-2016-X-042 Amendment 2017-1	Construction of existing 2-story concrete residential house	As Teo, Saipan	Wetland	Approved, 12/16/2016
7. B&J Corporation dba. Dive Y2K	12/21/2016 SLRm-2015-X-102	Marine Sports Activities	Garapan, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Renewal, Under Review
8. Aquaville Incorporation	12/23/2016 SLRm-2012-X-019	Marine Sports Activities	Managaha, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Renewal, Under Review

§15-10-210 of the CRM Rules and Regulation requires all permit applications to be published in a newspaper for general circulation within the CNMI within 15 days of receipt of application. The list reflects recently received permit applications and those with a recent change in status. New applications are marked with an asterisk (*).

The Public is invited to submit written comments regarding any of the above projects for which a permit decision has not been issued. All permit comments should identify the project by application number. Your comments should be mailed or hand-delivered to the DCRM Office. All persons who desire a public hearing regarding any project may do so by submitting a written request for a public hearing to the DCRM Office within fourteen (14) days for minor permits (APC's) and proposed amended major sitings. Public Hearings are required for all new major siting projects. All public hearing notices are published in a local newspaper of general circulation. Residents of Rota and Tinian may submit comments and hearing requests to their local DCRM Coordinator. Persons wishing to retain the right to appeal a DCRM Permit decision must file a notice of appeal with the DCRM office within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the DCRM permit decision as provided in Part 200 § 15-10-235 of the DCRM Regulations.

ROBERT T. TORRES (F0197)
Attorney at Law
P.O. Box 503758 CK
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel.: 234-7859
Fax: 234-5750

CHARITY R. HODSON (F0487)
Attorney at Law
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 502607 CK
Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone: (670) 234-1615
Facsimile: (670) 234-5749

Attorneys for Petitioner Edezer Arceo

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
FOR THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF	)	**CIVIL ACTION NO. 16-0124**
VICENTE ILO LAIROPI, Deceased.	)	**NOTICE OF HEARING ON PETITION FOR DECREE OF FINAL DISTRIBUTION**

TO: THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ANY HEIRS, CLAIMANTS, OR CREDITORS OF THE LATE VICENTE ILO LAIROPI OR HIS ESTATE:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that **Edezer Arceo** has petitioned the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands for final distribution of the Estate of Vicente Ilo Lairopi, the deceased. The attorney for Petitioner is **Robert T. Torres, Attorney at Law, whose address is Plata Drive, Chalan Kiya, P.O. Box 503758, Saipan, MP 96950.**

The hearing on the Petition is scheduled to be heard on January 12, 2017, at 9:00 a.m. at the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All interested persons or entities should appear at this hearing.

Any and all persons, creditors, or entities having claims against the deceased or his Estate are hereby required by law to file their claims with the Clerk of Court within sixty (60) days of this publication or the claim(s) will be baited. A copy of your claim should also be sent to **ROBERT T. TORRES Attorney at Law, at the address herein-above indicated.**

Dated this 21st day of December, 2016.

/s/ Clerk of Court
Deputy Clerk of Court

ROBERT T. TORRES (F0197)
Attorney at Law
P.O. Box 503758 CK
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel.: 234-7859
Fax: 234-5750

CHARITY R. HODSON (F0487)
Attorney at Law
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 502607 CK
Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone: (670) 234-1615
Facsimile: (670) 234-5749

Attorneys for Petitioner Edezer Arceo

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
FOR THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF	)	**CIVIL ACTION NO. 16-0124**
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Dated this 21st day of December, 2016.

/s/ Clerk of Court
Deputy Clerk of Court

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Black, Low Mileage of 2,731, STK#T16-10197
WAS $31,499
NOW $24,999*

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SR5, Red, Low Mileage of 2,105, STK#T16-02640
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NOW $34,799*

2016 Tundra 4WD Crew Cab, SR5
Red, Low Mileage of 3,478, STK#T16-11340
WAS $52,299
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2015 Yaris L Hatchback
Auto, Blue, STK#U16-127R
WAS $14,999
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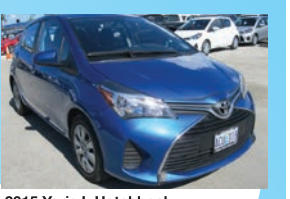

2015 Yaris L Hatchback
Auto, Blue, STK#U16-126R
WAS $14,899
NOW $13,999*

2015 Yaris, L Hatchback
Auto, Gray, STK#U16-137R
WAS $14,999
NOW $14,699*

2015 Toyota Yaris
White, HB, Auto, STK#U16-118R
WAS $14,999
NOW $14,499*

2015 Yaris L Hatchback
Auto, Lt Blue, STK#U16-124R
WAS $14,999
NOW $14,499*

2015 Yaris L Hatchback
Auto, Silver, STK#U16-134R
WAS $14,999
NOW $14,699*

2015 Yaris L Hatchback
Auto, Silver, STK#U16-125R
WAS $15,099
NOW $14,699*

2013 Nissan Rogue, SV Sport
Black, 4-Doors, 2WD, Auto, STK#U16-147T
NOW $15,999*

2015 Toyota Prius C-3
Gray, AT, STK#U16-099R
WAS $16,999
NOW $15,999*

2015 Toyota Prius C-3
Orange, AT, STK#U16-096R
WAS $17,099
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2015 Prius C HB, Auto
White, STK#U16-101R
WAS $17,099
NOW $16,499*

2014 Mitsubishi Outlander ES Sport
2WD, 4-Door, 4-Cyl, Blue, STK#U16-140P
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4-Dr. Sedan, Auto, Red, STK#U16-116R
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Green, 4-Doors, FWD, Auto, STK#U16-146T
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2014 Prius V, Third Generation Hybrid
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$21,499*

2013 Highlander Sport Utility, 2WD
4-Cyl, Auto, STK#U16-142P
$21,999*

2010 4Runner SR5
Black, 2WD, 4-Cyl, STK#U16-091T
WAS $24,399
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2016 Toyota Camry LE
Auto, 4-cyl, 6-spd, FWD, Dark Blue, STK#R16-017F
NOW $23,999*

2012 4Runner SR5
Gray, 2WD, 6-Cyl, STK#U16-094T
WAS $26,599
NOW $23,999*

2015 Mazda CX-5 Grand Touring Sport
Auto, 4-cyl, AWD, Red STK#U16-151T
NOW $24,599*

2015 Toyota Tacoma AC
4x4, 4-cyl, Gray, STK#R16-011F
NOW $26,199*

2016 4Runner, SR5, 4x4, 3rd Row
Auto, Red, STK#U16-136R
WAS $35,599
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Opinion

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Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

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EDITORIAL

Amazon and the twilight of the grocery line

Americans spend—waste—a year or two of their lives waiting in line, wishing it would move faster, staring daggers at any potential interlopers, fixing with disdain anyone who dawdles or delays the line's steady clip.

For those trying to avoid long queues, the grocery store is one of the most daunting challenges. You can pick the hours that you believe will be the least crowded, but then there's only one clerk on duty. You can take your chances in the 15-item line only to be flummoxed by a shopper who unfurls a raft of coupons or one who decides to write a check for the groceries s-l-o-w-l-y.

Now, thrilling news: Line-generated angst could soon vanish.

In Seattle, Amazon is testing a grocery store known as Amazon Go that allows customers to waltz in, choose items and then ... leave. All without lining up to be checked out. Amazon calls it "Just walk out technology."

Here's how it works: Customers tap their cellphones on a turnstile as they enter the store. That logs them into the store's network. As they pick up items and plunk them in their carts, sensors and other technology track the items and display the tally on a virtual cart. When a shopper leaves (presumably bagging his or her own groceries), an Amazon app tallies the bill and charges the customer's Amazon account.

Amazon plans to open its store to the public early next year.

Self-driving cars? A human landing on Mars? Another Cubs World Series win?

Meh.

A similarly anticipated milestone in human history—the Eradication of the Grocery Store Line—appears imminent.

OK, two provisos:

■ We can already hear the plaintive cries of people (including President-elect Trump) who mourn the loss of all those checkout clerk jobs. We don't relish the idea of putting people, aside from certain politicians, out of work. But

See AMAZON on Next Page

Does America have a religion?

By ANTHONY T. KRONMAN
Los Angeles Times

Anthony T. Kronman is Sterling Professor of Law at Yale Law School. He is the author of Confessions of a Born-Again Pagan. *He wrote this for the* Los Angeles Times.

Does America have a religion? It seems a strange question to ask. Some Americans have one religion, others another; many have none at all. If there is one conviction about religion that nearly all Americans share, it is that religion is a private matter that each of us is free to arrange as he or she thinks best. But our shared commitment to the separation of church and state can hardly be called a religion itself.

That government should stay out of religion, and religion out of government, is a principle as deeply entrenched in the American way of life as that of free expression, to which it is closely allied. Like others, I hold the principle dear. But I also have great sympathy for those who long for an America whose citizens are joined by more than rights and duties or shared material ends. And I believe this is not an empty dream—that America is, in fact, already held together by a common spiritual ideal, though it is not always recognized as such.

Walt Whitman described this ideal in his 1871 essay "Democratic Vistas." A fervent democrat, Whitman believed in government of, by and for the people. He was also a fierce champion of diversity.

But the diversity that Whitman loved was not the group-based kind we think of today. It was the endless diversity of individuals that Whitman revered. Indeed, "revered" is too weak a word to describe Whitman's awestruck wonder at the uniqueness of every individual he encountered, from the "pimply" prostitute plying her trade on the streets to the president and his Cabinet in their stately gatherings. In each of these he saw an infinitely complex human being like no other on Earth.

Whitman also believed that every individual makes a singular contribution to the story of the world and thereby shares, in a limited way, in the eternity of the world. He had a single word to express all these convictions. He insisted that every individual is "divine." We rarely see the divinity in others, or even in ourselves. But the deepest truth, according to Whitman, is that we are all expressions of the one everlasting God of the world.

The true end of American democracy, he declared, is to establish a system of laws, which treat all of us alike, so that we have the freedom and security to begin to explore the divine diversity that sets us apart, not group by group, but individual by individual. The attainment of this higher goal lies in the distant future, beyond democracy and equality, beyond the rule of law and the principle of tolerance. But it is something even better than all of these. Whitman called it America's "religious" ideal.

Whitman's use of that word is bound to strike some as strange.

For most Americans, religion means the Abrahamic faiths. These all rest on the belief that the world was created from nothing by a God beyond the world and time. From this perspective, the greatest heresy imaginable is the claim that the world itself is eternal. But this is just what Whitman believed. Unlike many atheists, Whitman was convinced that we are awash in a sea of divinity. But unlike every Christian, Jew and Muslim, he also believed that the eternity that resides in even the least conspicuous corner of the world is not the gift of a God beyond it, but the world's own possession—indeed, that "world" and "God" are two different words for the very same thing.

Although Whitman's religion has sometimes been described as a form of pantheism, his reverence for the individual has no counterpart in the pantheistic philosophies of pagan antiquity, or those of the East for that matter. It is the bequest—the afterglow—of Abrahamic belief, which first conferred on the individuality of every man and woman the infinite value that Whitman assigns it. A better name for his religion would be born-again paganism: a reaffirmation of the unity of God and the world, enriched by the central teaching of the three creationist religions that insist so vehemently on their separation.

Born-again paganism gives spiritual depth to America's culture of individualism. It explains our reverence for diversity in a way that avoids the worst excesses of identity politics. And it gives us a God that is magnified, not threatened, by the restless drive to explain all things that is such a striking feature of our national character.

In these respects, born-again paganism suits us well. It is the right religion for America.

No one can be compelled to embrace it, of course, but those who do may find it easier to see that, despite our proud commitment to the separation of church and state, we are one nation under God after all.

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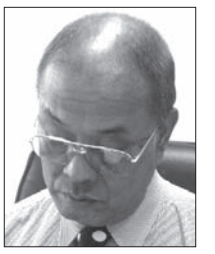
Day after Christmas



By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the* Saipan Tribune.

The evening was dimmed by fearful dark cloud gathering out east. I settled in my chair to begin reviewing bookmarked materials to see the lowering of the curtain before calling it a night. Reading is a daily routine before I turn to scribbling.

The wall of competition has slowly moved into these pearly isles. Troubling their eventual effects on a fragile island economy built largely on happenstance. In other words, the suspect "improvement" is not the result of a fully thought-out NMI plan. Thus, improvement is suspect!

When the Japanese casino industry takes off, it would adversely affect similar industry here. After all, Japan's infrastructure or economic acumen is far superior, mature, and sophisticated than the perceptual economy of the islands. A further contraction to the local economy is the fact that Japanese tourists are headed to the Aloha State. Isn't this a subtle message of "sayonara" from pioneers of investments here in the '60s?

There's a good chance that when revenue shrinks, most of the programs under the casino law would suffer heavy cuts too. This is the issue that the elected elite must be mindful of given the challenges it presents hence. Are there alternatives to sustaining perceived growth?

Introspectively, the order for Macau to begin economic diversification started making more sense to me. President Xi Jinpiñg must have seen how the new casino industry in Japan would grab a good portion of the gambling revenues from the enclave, not to mention the added competition from regional casino binge.

Ironically, the same should be done here. It means the use of the digital age to reset buttons to improve upon other sectors that would sustain what we have now. Negligence isn't the answer.

The poker syndrome must go, including our grand mañana singing *Que Sera*. It's good to be on the safe side of caution, guarding tiny improvements as investments fade right behind it. Not favorable when we finally buckle down to reality check.

Celebratory self-congratulations of "economic improvement" are perceptual at best, a feel good fallacy at worse. How would perceptual improvements be strengthened amidst tidings of major cuts coming from D.C. next year? Isn't it true that for every cut, it means the NMI shoulders the cost? Do we have the financial capability to cushion cuts in Medicaid, food stamps and other entitlement programs?

Attribution: Since years ago I've treaded issues and events unfolding if only to understand their meaning and likely results when the curtain is lowered. This is what "attribution" is all about.

If you use it to the hilt, you would have learned that your trusting view like the Trump presidency is highly suspect. Trump is out to fulfill his promise to millions of blue-collar workers who need jobs. The Republican-controlled Congress has set its agenda to reduce the $20 trillion federal deficit.

That the NMI simply failed to tax Best Sunshine's income of $13.5 billion is more the reason for Washington to render the NMI dead fish in the water on entitlement and other federally funded programs. Washington knows the NMI raked in billions from its casino industry!

Deficit dancing: While boastfully trumpeting a $43.3 million new income, Raffy subsequently announced a cumulative deficit of $53 million or a $10 million shortage. How come the $779 million owed the old retirement program wasn't included? Its exclusion doesn't absolve Raffy from paying it up nor would it improve loan rating for the islands in bond markets.

It goes to show that the financial posture of the NMI is far serious than half-cocked politicians are willing to admit. This is bad all around as we close out 2016.

Appropriation: When the Legislature surrenders its constitutionally provided authority to appropriate by allowing departments and agencies to borrow on their own, it would seem to me such action is unconstitutional.

It's an abrogation of constitutional mandate that equally prevents legislators from reviewing how borrowed funds are spent. Why would you shirk constitutional fiduciary duty? What good is your role if this authority is left to agencies to willfully dispose of your fiduciary duty? Isn't the budget review process the right time to gauge agency performance?

Obligations: The debts of the NMI with the old retirement program (known as employer's contribution) are around $779 million. I wonder why Raffy skipped including this figure in the cumulative deficit of the NMI? Whether you dodge it, skip it, or avoid it, it remains a debt of the NMI government.

Really sad how perceptual experts on pension program ruin the old system in favor of two confused programs: defined contribution and defined benefit. I think the intent is to kill the old system. They did! But it haunts the NMI given a huge sum of money it owes the program. Guess it's okay to destroy it then head off somewhere and blame others for your mess, right?

Then there's the $10.3 million owed PSS. Again, there was an agreed scheme to use federal funds for PSS to meet retirement and government payrolls. It was done with the understanding that the administration shoulders utility debts for PSS. The money was spent but the administration failed on its end of the bargain. Isn't PSS the institution of learning for some 12,000 to 15,000 students?

No wonder the emergence of a popular expression, "Not yet, already!" This is what we tell any Tom, Dick and Harry when quizzed if the NMI has paid PSS, CUC, CDA, etc. Hell, if I tell this to CUC I'd be without power in less than 24 hours! Seesuzzzz!

AMAZON

From Page 10

we assume the friendly produce guy would still be there, stocking the shelves. (Robots can't do that yet, right?) And you'd still need people to monitor the premises to make sure everyone was playing by the rules or to check customers' ID for alcohol purchases. And someone to keep all the tech running. Cashiers can be retrained for the new jobs this will create.

■ We've been disappointed before. Remember the self-service checkouts at groceries a few years back? Many of them were yanked out because of rampant technological glitches and increased losses from theft. Is a similar glitch waiting to happen here?

Don't get us wrong. We believe in ample sales forces in stores to help customers navigate an often-dizzying array of choices. We don't want to be waited on by robots. We don't want to scan the department and find nary a human in sight who can answer a question about a shirt or a skirt.

We do, though, believe technology can be harnessed for the greater good—in this case to streamline the interface between the customer and ringing up the sale—to short-circuit infuriatingly long lines.

We may soon have the power to eradicate this universally loathed instruction: Take a number. Wait your turn.

Some lines, to be sure, are exciting shared experiences. The long queues that form around Apple stores in anticipation of a new iPhone. The line for tickets to a new "Star Wars" movie. The long wait for the latest trendy restaurant, which stokes the appetite and confers bragging rights. (We waited two hours for a table!)

Technology has disrupted nearly every aspect of American life, not always for the better. Why not let it erase one scourge of modern life—the sludge-slow line?

Imagine world peace? Sure. But first, imagine a more exciting prospect: a world without a grocery checkout line.

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The five safe things left to talk about

By GINA BARRECA
The Hartford Courant

Gina Barreca is an English professor at the University of Connecticut, a feminist scholar who has written eight books, and a columnist for the Hartford Courant. *She can be reached through her website at http://www.ginabarreca.com.*

What do you consider a safe yet intriguing topic for conversation? Does such a thing still exist? We seem to be living in a world so fraught, so divided, so tense and so eager to engage in belligerence instead of banter that we have more or less forfeited our willingness to address with respect and civility those whose opinions oppose ours.

These days, discussing previously acceptable subjects such as the weather or health can lead to fistfights. A comment about the rain in Spain can turn into a fierce argument over the existence of climate change; an offhand remark about a child's cold can lead to name-calling over the anti-vaccine movement.

This can lead to bad behavior. For example, have you ever worried so much about the person who might be seated next to you at a meal that you've sneaked into the dining room before anyone else, looked at the name cards and then changed them? No, of course not, and neither have I ... not on a regular basis. But c'mon, haven't you been tempted?

If you know that you're going to spend three hours sitting next to a woman who holds views so conservative she makes Sarah Palin sound like Gloria Steinem, or a guy so evangelical about clean eating that he exists solely on air ferns, sticking with the assigned seating chart is a tough thing to swallow.

But because we need to exist in the world as social animals, what neutral conversational territories—if any—can we approach without trepidation?

I asked my friends about their go-to topics and I was warned more often than I was reassured. My lovely niece Anne Barreca, director of the Battery Park City Library in New York City, said that discussing her job is off-limits because "Public librarianship is not a neutral career in terms of our stance on inclusiveness and diversity." Who knew?

This explains why most people insisted we talk about five things and five things only: children, grandchildren, pets, sports and gardening.

It turns out that I'm in trouble. Although I have stepchildren, I've never given birth. For some folks, that knocks me out in the first round. There are no grandchildren. I like my cats but I'm not terribly interested in yours, and cats are the only pets I like. I'd have a better chance at winning "Jeopardy!" if the category were particle physics rather than sports because I believe particle physics matter. Gardening? I don't even go out outside. My husband keeps making the deck larger so that I'll venture farther out into the yard.

How about discussing "Star Wars?" Doesn't everybody like "Star Wars?" Isn't that safe? Apparently not. My friend Tim Ruggieri declared the new film to be intensely political, with the "Empire run by British aristocrats who are happy to blow up a city to make a point." Never mind.

Here's how I like to encourage genuine conversation without risking what my friend Ed Culver calls "weaponized glances" from others: Ask people about their worst times. I'm not kidding. Ask the people sitting next to you about the worst grade they ever got, the worst meal they ever cooked, the worst outfit they ever wore, the worst song they ever loved. Most of the stories will end up being funny (although there's always a risk that someone was taken hostage while listening to a bad song and cooking a bad meal).

Our worst moments often transform themselves into our best stories because we shape them and re-create them as we form the incident into a narrative. Comics know that time plus pain equals humor and that we can redeem even awful moments from the past by translating them into a shared experience. Remember, much depends on being generous enough to others to keep our stories light.

Or ask someone how she learned to ride a bike, cook an egg, tie her shoelaces, memorize her first line from a school play. You'll learn something significant about a life.

This season is supposed to focus on redemption, and redemption is not just about getting your money back by returning a gift. Real gifts can't be returned, anyway. Real gifts are singular and arrive precisely when you need them.

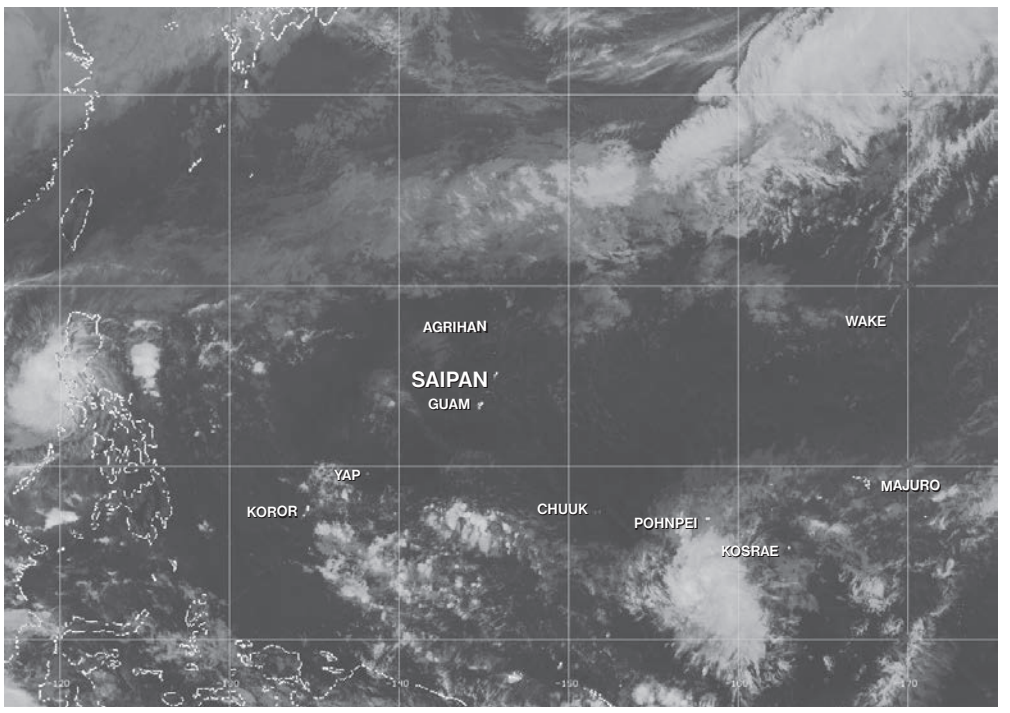
Great moments of conversation can be those gifts.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼79°	▲89° ▼79°	▲89° ▼79°	▲89° ▼79°	▲89° ▼79°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:50 AM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2016
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Moderate to fresh trades and isolated showers are present across the Marianas. Combined seas have been varying between 7 and 9 feet at the buoys.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▼ ▲
Guam and Rota	Morning clouds	79 / 88 °F
Palau	Partly cloudy	79 / 89 °F
Yap	Partly cloudy	80 / 85 °F
Chuuk	Partly sunny	80 / 85 °F
Pohnpei	Heavy rain	80 / 84 °F
Kosrae	Partly sunny	82 / 87 °F
Majuro	Mostly cloudy	79 / 83 °F

AROUND THE GLOBE		▼ ▲
Auckland	Partly cloudy	60 / 70 °F
Beijing	Morning clouds	18 / 34 °F
Hong Kong	Morning clouds	56 / 67 °F
Honolulu	Mostly sunny	73 / 79 °F
London	Sunny	36 / 46 °F
Los Angeles	Sunny	45 / 68 °F
Manila	Afternoon clouds	79 / 89 °F
Melbourne	Partly sunny	67 / 84 °F
Miami	Partly sunny	74 / 80 °F
New York	Light rain	42 / 55 °F
Osaka	Mostly cloudy	41 / 58 °F
Paris	Sunny	36 / 47 °F
Pusan	Morning clouds	34 / 46 °F
Rome	Partly cloudy	39 / 60 °F
Salem	Light showers	41 / 47 °F
San Francisco	Heavy rain	41 / 56 °F
Seoul	Morning clouds	16 / 31 °F
Tokyo	Rain	43 / 62 °F
Washington, DC	Mostly sunny	48 / 63 °F

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- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		
12:37 AM	LOW TIDE	-0.09 Feet
7:28 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.7 Feet
12:44 PM	LOW TIDE	1.12 Feet
5:49 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.86 Feet

	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:41 AM	5:55 PM
Wednesday	6:42 AM	5:56 PM
Thursday	6:42 AM	5:56 PM
Friday	6:42 AM	5:57 PM
Saturday	6:43 AM	5:57 PM

	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	4:40 AM	4:23 PM	-
Wednesday	5:29 AM	5:10 PM	-
Thursday	6:19 AM	5:58 PM	-
Friday	7:08 AM	6:49 PM	-
Saturday	7:57 AM	7:41 PM	-

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 5, 2016

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA6394	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA6392	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA6391	1:30pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota
UA6390	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA6398	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA6396	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA6391	1:30pm	2:05pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA6391	2:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL297	4:20pm	7:00pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ626	2:20am	6:00am	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
7C3403	4:45am	8:30am	Daily
LJ652	2:10pm	6:05pm	Daily
7C3401	4:00pm	7:45pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	6:35am	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:20am	11:05am	1 via ICN
OZ626/701	2:50am	11:05am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA6394/191	4:15am	8:55am	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
UA6394/PR111	4:15am	9:15am	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
PR1572	5:45am	7:45am	7, 4
UA6391/183	1:30pm	8:50pm	5 via Rota-GUM
UA6391/183	1:30pm	9:10pm	1, 4, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA6391/193	1:30pm	10:35pm	5 via Rota-GUM-ROR
UA6390/183	2:20pm	8:50pm	2 via GUM
UA6390/183	2:20pm	9:10pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA6390/193	2:20pm	10:35pm	2 via GUM-ROR

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

HX077	2:00am	5:00am	1, 4
OZ626/721	2:20am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA6391/159	1:30pm	9:55pm	1, 5 via Rota-GUM
UA6390/159	2:20pm	9:55pm	3, 6 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA6393	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA6395	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA6391	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA6390	12:10pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6 via Rota
UA6397	4:45pm	5:35pm	Daily
UA6399	8:30pm	9:20pm	Daily

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA6390	12:10pm	12:45pm	2, 3, 6

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA6390	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:30am	3:05pm	Daily

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

LJ651	7:30am	1:10pm	Daily
7C3402	9:30am	3:00pm	Daily
OZ625	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ625	8:15pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:05pm	1:55am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:40pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA190/6397	9:55am	5:35pm	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:15pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:15pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR1571	10:25pm	4:45am+1	3, 6
UA192/6395	9:45pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via ROR-GUM
PR110/UA6395	10:05pm	8:05am+1	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/6395	10:25pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/6395	11:30pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:10pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
HX076	5:30pm	12:30am+1	3, 7
UA116/6395	9:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju Air; HX: Hong Kong Airlines; LJ: Jin Air; ETD: Estimated Time of Departure;ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
6:30AM	6:45AM	Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

Registration for NMC's spring semester ongoing

The Northern Marianas College is reminding all current and prospective students about the following important dates for the upcoming spring 2017 semester:

REGISTRATION FOR CLASSES

■ Ongoing until Jan. 13, 2017: Registration for ongoing and new/ readmitted students via Proa Portal

■ Jan. 9-13, 2017: Late registration/ advising period

■ Jan, 5, 2017: Prior Learning Assessment program info session5:30pm (Room D-1)

■ Jan. 3-6, 2017: Placement tests, 9:30am or 1:30pm (Room N-5)

■ Jan. 9-12, 2017: 9:30am or 1:30pm (Room N-5)

To schedule a placement test, call 237-6774 or email date/time preference to isabel.matsunaga@marianas.edu.

■ Jan. 6, 2017: Orientation for new and international students.

■ Jan. 17, 2017: First day of classes

NMC will also be highlighting its Credit for Prior Learning Program at an info session at 5:30pm on Thursday, Jan. 5, 2017 (Room D1). Anyone interested in learning more about this program is invited to attend.

For more information about registering for classes for the upcoming spring 2017 semester or to apply for admission, contact the NMC Office of Admissions and Records at 237-6768 / 6769 / 6771 or visit www.marianas.edu. ***(NMC)***

Lions Club members of the Filipino-American, Saipan Alliance, and Saipan Marianas pose for a photo along with staff of the Children's Developmental Assistance Center during the toy turnover at the center in Garapan on Dec. 22.
MICHAEL T. SANTOS

Lions Club donates toys to CDAC

Lions Club organizations in the CNMI donated toys to the Children's Developmental Assistance Center last Dec. 22. The donation is done every Christmas time and has been going on for over 17 years.

Robin Palacios, interim coordinator for the Early Intervention Program for CDAC, said, "We are grateful for all Lions Club donations. We've developed a partnership and an ongoing exciting relationship with them. Although we meet once or twice a year, it's a joyous occasion knowing all the happiness it will bring to families here."

Early Intervention provides services to infants and toddlers with disabilities as well as their families at no cost.

"This is just our way of giving back in any way we can," said regional chair for Lions Club Ladyvir Canape.

The donation also involved the Saipan Marianas, Saipan Filipino-American, and Saipan Alliance Lions clubs.

"We made this project a regional matter so that more people would participate. The more help, the better," Canape said.

The club fundraised for all toys given to the center, accumulating about $500 in total for the 60 recipients this year. The children range from birth to 3 years old.

"We made sure each child will receive an appropriate gift based on their age and sexuality," Palacios said.

Due to confidentiality purposes, the Lions Club was not able to see the children or their families.

"It feels good to be a help to others. I'm always looking forward to seasons of giving so we could do events such as this. We may not see the kids, but it still gives us a really nice feeling that in our own simple way, we helped make a positive change in the community," Canape said.

Another club is under the process of being chartered by March next year and will focus more on the involvement of residents. For more information, call Canape at 989-2545 or Annamae Adaza at 483-5237.

Canape said, "For people who want to join the Lions Club, you must have a heart for serving, because that is what we're all about." ***(Michael T. Santos)***

Torres says use of excessive force not tolerated

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A video showing a police officer beating a suspect on the ground has prompted Gov. Ralph DLG Torres to assert that the use of excessive force by authorities is not tolerated

Torres said that he had already watched the video of the incident. "The recording is out there and I also saw it. Obviously, we don't tolerate brutality in any level."

The incident happened last Dec. 9 and was part of a 40-minute car chase that ended when the vehicle overturned in Koblerville. A resident caught the police officer beating the suspect on video and uploaded it on Facebook. The video was shared a number of times.

Torres said that government officials must observe the rule of law. "It is the police officers' and other enforcement agencies' duty to protect. As government officials, we must hold a high standard for protection and not for brutality."

He added that he would let the authorities do their job of investigating the incident. "At the same time we must make sure the [Attorney General's Office] and other agencies involved would be allowed to conduct their investigation before we make any comments. It's not appropriate to jump to conclusions, saying who is right or wrong."

Vincent San Nicolas Norita was the suspect being beaten up by a police officer. A police officer saw the 31-year-old ex-convict driving fast, forcing police to chase the suspect from Tanapag to Koblerville. Norita, in several instances, nearly hit other passing cars and pedestrian.

Norita was arrested on charges of theft of vehicle, causing accidents, reckless driving, eluding a police officer, and receiving stolen items. His passenger, Joe E. Ada, was arrested for possession of a controlled substance.

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS JUDICIARY

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB17-JUDICIARY-03

SUBMISSION DATE: JANUARY 4, 2017 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF A NEW 4X4/AWD 5 DOOR UTILITY VEHICLE FOR THE CNMI JUDICIARY, DRUG COURT"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE CASHIER WINDOW, DOOR #5, LOCATED AT THE GUMA HUSTISIA / IIMWAL AWEEWE / HOUSE OF JUSTICE, SUSUPE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ HON. ALEXANDRO C. CASTRO
CHIEF JUSTICE

/S/ JOHN T. VILLAGOMEZ
JUDICIARY PROCUREMENT OFFICER

Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
1 Lower Navy Hill Road Navy Hill, Saipan, MP 96950

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP16-CHCC/FACILITY-007

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JANUARY 27, 2017 TIME: 11:00AM
OPENING DATE: JANUARY 30, 2017 TIME: 10:00AM

"FOR HOUSEKEEPING SERVICES – COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION"

COPIES OF THE ITB PACKET MAY BE PICKED-UP AT CHCC PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY DIVISION-MEDICAL SUPPLY STORAGE FACILITY LOWER BASE SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ JESUS D. BABAUTA
ACTING CHCC DIRECTOR OF P&S

Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
1 Lower Navy Hill Road Navy Hill, Saipan, MP 96950

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP17-CHCC/WIC-09

SUBMISSIOND DEADLINE: JANUARY 13, 2017 TIME: 3:00PM
OPENING DATE: JANUARY 16, 2017 TIME: 10:00AM

"FOR BANGLADESHI INTERPRETER/TRANSLATIONS SERVICES – CHCC WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN PROGRAM"

COPIES OF THE RFP PACKET MAY BE PICKED-UP AT THE CHCC PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY DIVISION-MEDICAL SUPPLY STORAGE FACILITY, LOWER BASE SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ JESUS D. BABAUTA
ACTING CHCC DIRECTOR OF P&S

Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
1 Lower Navy Hill Road Navy Hill, Saipan, MP 96950

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP17-CHCC/WIC-10

SUBMISSIOND DEADLINE: JANUARY 13, 2017 TIME: 3:00PM
OPENING DATE: JANUARY 16, 2017 TIME: 10:00AM

"FOR CHINESE INTERPRETER/TRANSLATIONS SERVICES – CHCC WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN PROGRAM"

COPIES OF THE RFP PACKET MAY BE PICKED-UP AT THE CHCC PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY DIVISION-MEDICAL SUPPLY STORAGE FACILITY, LOWER BASE SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSALS AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ JESUS D. BABAUTA
ACTING CHCC DIRECTOR OF P&S

Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
1 Lower Navy Hill Road Navy Hill, Saipan, MP 96950

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP17-CHCC/WIC-11

SUBMISSIOND DEADLINE: JANUARY 13, 2017 TIME: 3:00PM
OPENING DATE: JANUARY 16, 2017 TIME: 10:00AM

"FOR JANITORIAL CLEANING SERVICES – CHCC WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN PROGRAM"

COPIES OF THE RFP PACKET MAY BE PICKED-UP AT THE CHCC PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY DIVISION-MEDICAL SUPPLY STORAGE FACILITY, LOWER BASE SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSALS AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ JESUS D. BABAUTA
ACTING CHCC DIRECTOR OF P&S

Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
1 Lower Navy Hill Road Navy Hill, Saipan, MP 96950

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP17-CHCC/WIC-12

SUBMISSIOND DEADLINE: JANUARY 13, 2017 TIME: 3:00PM
OPENING DATE: JANUARY 16, 2017 TIME: 10:00AM

"FOR TRAINING AND TECHINICAL ASSISTANCE – CHCC WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN PROGRAM"

COPIES OF THE RFP PACKET MAY BE PICKED-UP AT THE CHCC PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY DIVISION-MEDICAL SUPPLY STORAGE FACILITY, LOWER BASE SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSALS AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ JESUS D. BABAUTA
ACTING CHCC DIRECTOR OF P&S

PATA Micronesia Chapter meeting in Guam

TUMON, Guam—Members of the Pacific Asia Travel Association Micronesia Chapter gathered for the organization's third and final tri-annual chapter meeting of the year in Guam from Dec, 1 to 3, 2016.

The PATA Micronesia Chapter featured Alicia L.G. Limtiaco, U.S. Attorney for the districts of Guam and the Northern Marianas Islands, who addressed the issue of "human trafficking" at the general membership meeting on Dec. 2 at the Guam Museum. The "Kids From Chuuk" with band Micro Nation, also had a special performance during the welcome reception at the newly opened Terraza at Dos Amantes, Puntan Dos Amantes (Two Lovers Point). The popular teen group recently won "Best Original Song" at the 2016 Island Music Awards on Guam for their single *I'm Gone* and was also featured in a short film at the 2016 Guam International Film Festival, which won the prestigious "Best of Festival" award.

» New board of directors elected

"We were very excited that U.S. Attorney Limtiaco and the talented group Kids from Chuuk joined us for the final PATA Micronesia Tri-annual Chapter Meeting of 2016. It was a great time to share and inform all our partners of the great things happening in our region of the world," said Pilar Laguaña, PATA Micronesia chair. "PATA chapter members within the Pacific region also had opportunities to network with each other and share upcoming events and activities for 2017."

Additionally, the PATA chapter held their board of directors elections for 2017-2018. Results of the elections included five board of directors/officers to the following positions: chair Pilar Laguaña, Guam Visitors Bureau director of Global Marketing (incumbent); vice chair Bermance Aldis, Federated States of Micronesia Visitors board (incumbent); treasurer Judy Torres, deputy managing director of the Marianas Visitors Authority (incumbent); two new members, secretary Faustina Rehuher-Marugg, Palau Visitors Authority board member, and alternate board of director Paula Monk, United Airlines director of Sales, Guam and Micronesia.

The newly elected board members also assigned the chairmanship of each of the chapter's standing committees to include education, marketing, membership, and a newly established committee called the Culture, Heritage, and Environmental Committee.

The tri-annual chapter meeting concluded with Guam sharing its "Visit Guam 2017: Year of Love" campaign, as well as the rest of its signature events and launch of the 2016 Shop Guam e-Festival. Shop Guam started on Dec. 1 and will run through Feb. 4, 2017, with offers and discounts from hundreds of local participating vendors. ***(PATA)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The PATA Micronesia Chapter board of directors/officers 2017-2018. Left to right (back row): Bermance Aldis, FSM Visitors Board/incumbent vice chair 2017-2018, PATA Micronesia Chapter; Pilar Laguana, GVB director of Global Marketing/incumbent chair 2017-2018, PATA Micronesia Chapter; Don Evans, vice chair of the Culture, Heritage and Environment Committee 2017-2018; and Catherine Perry, individual chapter member-Saipan/incumbent PATA Micronesia Chapter public relations manager. Front row: Faustina Rehuher-Marugg, Palau Visitors Authority board of director/secretary, PATA Micronesia Chapter 2017-2018; Judy Torres, MVA deputy managing director/treasurer, PATA Micronesia Chapter 2017-2018; Bobbie Taitano, Mystical Tours and Adventure-Guam/PATA chapter, Membership Committee chair; Victoria-Blas Toves, individual chapter member-Guam/vice chair of the PATA chapter Membership Committee; Regina Livaie Nedlic, GVB marketing manager-Pacific marketing/vice chair, PATA chapter Marketing Committee; and Kadoi Ruluked, Palau Visitors Authority marketing manager/chair of the PATA chapter Marketing Committee.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The PATA Micronesia Chapter board of directors/officers 2017-2018. From left, Faustina Rehuher-Marugg, Palau Visitors Authority board of director/secretary, PATA Micronesia Chapter 2017-2018; Judy Torres, MVA deputy managing director/treasurer, PATA Micronesia Chapter 2017-2018; Bermance Aldis, FSM Visitors board/incumbent vice chairman 2017-2018, PATA Micronesia Chapter; Pilar Laguana, GVB director of Global Marketing/incumbent chair 2017-2018, PATA Micronesia Chapter. Not shown: Paula Monk, sales director, Guam and Micronesia, United Airlines, serves as alternate board member.

NMI tourism ambassadors in Japan meet

Northern Mariana Islands tourism ambassadors recently appointed by the Marianas Visitors Authority in Japan met in Tokyo on Monday, Dec. 19.

Fifty-five ambassadors—largely travel agents selling the NMI—attended the event, which was jointly hosted by the MVA and Delta Air Lines. The MVA gave an update on its ongoing and upcoming market programs in Japan, including an ambassador booking and public relations promotion to help drive visitors to Saipan, Tinian, and Rota and the MVA's See My Marianas Instagram promotion. In addition, NMI tourism ambassador ID cards were issued, providing benefits from 13 MVA partners to ambassadors toward the goal of encouraging them to repeat travel to the NMI. To close the evening, a raffle drawing was held of prizes donated by Delta Air Lines and DFS Saipan.

The NMI Tourism Ambassador Program and this week's meeting were also covered by travel trade news media "Travel Vision."

Last fiscal year, the Northern Marianas received just over 62,000 visitors from Japan. ***(MVA)***

MVA

The Marianas Visitors Authority held a follow-up meeting on Dec. 19, 2017, in Japan with fifty-five Northern Mariana Islands tourism ambassadors appointed earlier this year to update them on the destination and new promotions targeting Japan.

Guam Republicans announce leadership

HAGÅTÑA, Guam—The Republican senators-elect announced their leadership positions for the 34th Guam Legislature.

Selected as minority leader is four-term senator-elect James V. Espaldon. Senator-elect Thomas A. Morrison will serve as assistant minority leader, with senator-elect Mary C. Torres filling the post of minority whip and senator-elect Louisa B. Muña being tapped for assistant minority whip.

Espaldon said: "Following a very candid and lively discussion on the topic of leadership positions and organizing our caucus, the selection process went very smoothly. The Republican members of the incoming 34th Guam Legislature are united in a common goal of moving our island forward and bringing better opportunity for all. We look forward to working with our colleagues across the aisle on issues of great importance to our community. We wish them Godspeed as they continue to deliberate on their leadership positions."

All of the members of the incoming Republican caucus wish the people of Guam a very Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous 2017! ***(PR)***

Island Snapshots

GIFT-GIVING MISSION
One of the agencies that The Corporate Social Responsibility department of Imperial Pacific International, Ltd. has visited was the Division of Youth Services. The donation will support DYS' programs and activities.

IPI/BSI-CSR

IPI/BSI-CSR
The Corporate Social Responsibility department of Imperial Pacific International, Ltd. has brought smiles to children-patients and their families at the pediatric ward at the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. This is part CSR's ongoing gift-giving mission.

IPI/BSI-CSR
Last Friday, Saipan Unity Lions Club officials extended the organization's appreciation to the Corporate Social Responsibility department of Imperial Pacific International, Ltd. for its valuable community work.

SUBMERGED LANDS JON PEREZ
CNMI officials led by Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, seated center, pose for a group photo after the signing of a document that transferred the management of submerged lands in the CNMI to the local government while Lt. Gov. Victor B. Hocog and Delegate Gregorio Kilili Sablan look on at the Governor's Office conference room last week.

SENSITIVITY TRAINING JON PEREZ
U.S. Attorney for the Districts of Guam and CNMI Alicia Limtiaco, center, joins participants of last Wednesday's sensitivity training at the Department os Public Safety academy. In a first for the Commonwealth, the training aimed to raise the police's awareness, understanding, and sensitivity of issues relating to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and intersex community.

Pacific

China's first aircraft carrier heads for Western Pacific

By LOUISE WATT
ASSOCIATED PRESS

AP
In this undated file photo released by China's Xinhua News Agency, China's aircraft carrier Liaoning berths in a port of China.

BEIJING (AP)—China's first aircraft carrier has set off for the Western Pacific for an open-sea training exercise, the Defense Ministry said.

State media said Sunday that it is the first time that the Liaoning, which was commissioned by the Chinese navy in 2012, has headed to "distant sea waters." The Western Pacific region stretches from China to New Zealand and encompasses countries in the Pacific, Oceania and parts of Asia.

The statement said a navy formation including the Liaoning set off Saturday for training in the Western Pacific, without elaborating on the location, as part of an annual training plan.

The exercise takes place at a time of tension between China and the United States, the Pacific Ocean's dominant power, over the sensitive issue of Taiwan, a self-governing island that Beijing claims as its territory.

President-elect Donald Trump took a congratulatory Dec. 2 phone call with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen, marking the first time an American president or president-elect has publicly spoken to Taiwan's leader since Washington broke of its formal diplomatic relationship with Taiwan in 1979. To outrage in Beijing, Trump later suggested he could reevaluate U.S. policy on Taiwan.

China seized a U.S. Navy underwater glider in the South China Sea on Dec. 16 in what was seen by Chinese analysts as a warning to Trump.

China said last month that its aircraft carrier, purchased as an incomplete hull from Ukraine more than a decade ago, was ready to engage in combat. The Liaoning recently completed its first live-fire exercise along with fighters in the Bohai Sea in eastern China and, on Friday, the military announced it had carried out a series of fighter launch, recovery and air combat exercises slightly farther afield in the Yellow Sea.

On Saturday morning, the Liaoning carried out training in the East China Sea, according to footage shown on state broadcaster China Central Television. A separate statement from the Defense Ministry said that several carrier-based fighter jets and helicopters took off one after another and returned after completing an air tactical confrontation and air refueling exercise.

The Japanese Defense Ministry said it spotted the Liaoning as part of a fleet of eight Chinese warships that included destroyers and frigates, in the central part of the East China Sea for the first time. It said there was no incursion into Japanese waters.

China hasn't described specifically how it intends to use the Liaoning, but it is seen as helping reinforce China's increasingly assertive claims over almost all of the South China Sea, which is home to key shipping lanes, rich fishing grounds and a potential wealth of mineral resources.

Five other governments claim the maritime space either in part or in whole, and the Philippines and Vietnam in particular have sought assistance from the U.S. and others in beefing up their ability to resist China, including its construction of seven islands by piling sand atop coral reefs.

APTC-SINU partnership to benefit Solomon Islanders

The Australia-Pacific Technical College has signed a partnership agreement with the Solomon Islands National University for the delivery of hospitality programs.

A key benefit of the partnership is that more Solomon Islanders will have direct access to Certificate III in Hospitality – Accommodation Services qualifications from next year.

APTC is an innovative development project funded by the Australian government, delivering Australian skills and qualifications for a wide range of vocational careers for skilled Pacific workers.

APTC chief executive officer Denise O'Brien said, "We welcome the opportunity to partner with SINU in the delivery of qualifications that will ultimately support Solomon Islanders to gain the skills that support the fast growing tourism and hospitality sector. We look forward to working with the team at SINU to upskill trainers and develop infrastructure at the university."

SINU vice chancellor Dr. Glynn Galo has welcomed the partnership, which he says aligns with SINU's objective to improve the quality and relevance of its trade program delivery through investments in teacher capacity development, curriculum and learning materials and infrastructure.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
From left, Solomon Islands National University pro vice chancellor (academic) professor Basil Marasinghe, APTC chief executive officer Denise O'Brien, SINU vice chancellor Dr. Glynn Galo, counselor-Human Development, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Melissa Stutsel, and team leader, Skills For Economic Growth Project, Barry Peddle.

The partnership also paves the way for a study pathway for Solomon Islanders from local training provider Don Bosco Technical Institute to gain higher qualifications at SINU.

Students of the Certificate II in Hospitality program, which is currently delivered by APTC and DBTI, will be given the opportunity to undertake the Certificate III in Hospitality program at the SINU School of Business and Management when they have completed six months of work placement next semester.

APTC is working toward an additional partnership with SINU in collaboration with Australia's bilateral program, the Solomon Islands Skills for Economic Growth program to support the delivery of skills and qualifications for the automotive industry in Solomon Islands. APTC will work with the Solomon Islands Skills for Economic Growth project to combine their resources to deliver an institutional strengthening program for SINU.

These initiatives complement efforts by the Australian government to support SINU to develop the quality, quantity and relevance of skills training to improve employment opportunities, and the productivity of the private sector in Solomon Islands.

The APTC Certificate III in Light Vehicle Technology program will also continue to be made available to Solomon Island citizens as a scholarship program to APTC campuses in Papua New Guinea and Fiji.

Both programs will be made available to existing workers in the industry. The first cohort of students will commence classes in January 2017. ***(APTC)***

Competition raises awareness on non-communicable diseases in the Pacific

SUVA, Fiji—The Secretariat of the Pacific Community has launched a regional photography competition in an effort to creatively bring into focus the immense impact that non-communicable diseases, or NCDs, has on Pacific Island countries and territories.

The "Focus on NCDs in the Pacific" initiative provides an opportunity for amateur and professional photographers throughout the region to capture images portraying the impact of NCDs on Pacific Island economies and homes and how they can be prevented and managed.

Photographers can enter their images into one or more of the four categories:

1. NCD prevention
2. Social impact of NCDs
4. Culture and NCD prevention

NCDs, primarily heart disease, cancers, chronic lung diseases and diabetes are the leading cause of death in the Pacific region, placing added stress and pressure on individuals, families and island health systems. These diseases are also largely preventable and manageable.

"The photo competition is all about showcasing the challenges non-communicable diseases pose for people living in the Pacific and the role each person can play in preventing these diseases," SPC non-communicable diseases team leader, Dr. Si Thu Win Tin, says.

Keeping in theme with the promotion of health and wellbeing, the winner of each category will receive a Wi-Fi connected fitness wristband to track daily physical activity.

The images submitted for the competition will be used to support SPC's health campaigns and displayed across a number of platforms including social media and print publications.

"I encourage everyone from all Pacific countries and territories to enter the photography competition. A picture is worth a thousand words. This is your chance to show the world how NCDs are affecting your country, and how Pacific people are rising to address this challenge," said Dr. Si Thu Win Tin.

More information about the competition including entry terms and conditions, can be found on the SPC website or by contacting Solene Bertrand on email: SoleneB@spc.int.

Competition closes on Jan. 15 2017. ***(SPC)***

Business

The holiday shopping season is losing some of its power

NEW YORK (AP)—The holiday shopping season is losing some of its power in the year's sales.

November and December now account for less than 21 percent of annual retail sales at physical stores, down from a peak of over 25 percent, and experts believe it'll keep dropping. Those extra percentage points would have translated into an extra $70 billion more in buying for last year, says Michael Niemira, principal at The Retail Economist.

The season had steadily gained in importance and peaked in the early '80s, before the dominance of big discounters like Wal-Mart stalled its growth as shoppers began moving away from department stores. Still, the two-month period held its own through the mid-'90s, when online shopping for deals took hold.

"There was a mindset even before online shopping," said Niemira, whose data goes back to 1967. "But this just accelerated it."

In general, many people are shopping for the holidays all year long now, mirroring the trend for back-to-school items. Heavy discounting has diluted sales, and with big promotions throughout the year, shoppers no longer hold off making their biggest purchases until the holidays.

This year, the contentious presidential election delayed some shoppers, and with Christmas falling on a Sunday, stores are expecting a bigger number of last-minute buyers. At a busy Target store in Brick, New Jersey on Saturday morning, many shoppers seemed to be picking up small items to use as stocking stuffers. Others were hoping to find a last-minute deal.

"I'm pretty much set for Christmas, so I thought I would come down and see what I could find on sale, like maybe a TV," Terry Kreft, 38, said as she strolled through the store. She has spent about $600 on gifts this year, taking advantage of discounts during the traditional holiday-season shopping days right after Thanksgiving, called "Black Friday" and "Cyber Monday."

"I was pretty much done with my shopping before December got rolling," Kreft said.

But a late rush isn't expected to make up the difference.

"It's no longer a seasonal business," said Marshal Cohen, chief industry analyst at consumer research firm NPD Group Inc. "It's a yearlong investment for the consumer. And retailers need to change. They have to excite shoppers early in the season and later in the season—and all year long."

Here's what's behind the shift:

SHOPPERS DON'T WAIT TO BUY BIG-TICKET ITEMS: Stores now offer good deals throughout the year on products like TVs and appliances, making waiting until the end of the year less appealing. Deloitte LLP found 30 percent of shoppers planned to wait for holiday sales to buy large gifts, down from 35 percent a year ago.

"People are not holding back and waiting because they find a good price for all the things they are looking for," said Rod Sides, vice chairman of Deloitte.

Christopher Rogers, a research analyst at Panjiva, which looks at imports, says he has seen a smoothing out of imports during the pre-holiday shopping season from July to November on key items like apparel, toys and furniture.

The shift complicates matters for retailers, which could usually concentrate their efforts on capturing shoppers during the holiday window.

HEAVY DISCOUNTING: With fierce competition online, particularly from Amazon, stores are constantly trying to outdo each other and even undercutting themselves on prices from the previous year. Shoppers have been trained to demand deals, and won't break the habit.

"The heightened competition being driven by the influence of e-commerce largely is driving prices down on popular holiday items," said Traci Gregorski, senior vice president of marketing at Market Track. "Retailers know consumers frequently compare prices on these categories online and are discounting more heavily to drive traffic and sales."

What to do with unwanted gift cards

By SARAH SKIDMORE SELL
AP PERSONAL FINANCE WRITER

Gift cards are a popular present at the holidays the National Retail Federation says more than half of consumers plan to give one this year.

But they aren't always wanted—research organization CEB TowerGroup estimates that $1 billion of the $130 billion spent on gift cards last year went unused.

It could be that the gift card is for a retailer or other business the recipient doesn't like. Or they simply don't have access to the restaurant or movie theater to spend it.

So if you got a gift card that is going to sit untouched, what should you do? Here are a few options:

REGIFT IT

This may be your easiest solution.

If you can't use the card or just don't want it, someone else might. So why not hand it over to a loved one who wants it? Gift cards are typically good for several years and there are no rules about changing hands.

SELL IT

There are various exchanges online, such as Cardpool.com, Raise.com and Cardcash.com, where you can buy and sell gift cards. You won't get the full value of the card but you'll recoup some of the value.

Expect to get about 80 to 90 cents on the dollar of the value of the card at a reputable site, said Teri Llach, chief marketing officer for the Blackhawk Network, which owns Cardpool.

Llach strongly discourages consumers from going rogue and trying to sell or buy one for themselves online as there's no way to tell if you are being conned. An established and reputable site will guarantee that you are getting the promised balance in the time frame you want.

If you are more of an in-person sort, you can visit a CoinStar Exchange kiosk to get cash for your gift cards. Target will allow you to bring in gift cards for major brands with remaining balances on them and exchange them for a Target gift card.

You still won't get the full value, but it's a better deal than gathering dust.

DONATE IT

A feel-good, do-good option is to donate your unwanted gift card.

You can do this by handing the card directly to a charity. Consider a church, food bank or school that might use it to buy supplies, or offer it to a needy family in your community.

Cardpool and Compassion International co-founded CardFunder which lets consumers donate gift cards with available funds on them to a number of charitable efforts.

Nation

Trump says he's closing foundation, but Democrats want more

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP)—President-elect Donald Trump says he will dissolve his charitable foundation before taking office to avoid conflicts of interest. The Democratic Party says that's not enough and is calling for the billionaire businessman to put his assets in a blind trust.

AP

In this Dec. 15, 2016, file photo, President-elect Donald Trump speaks during a rally in Hershey, Pa.

The New York attorney general's office has been investigating the foundation following media reports that foundation spending went to benefit Trump's campaign. A spokeswoman says the foundation cannot close until the investigation is complete.

Trump said in a statement Saturday that he has directed his counsel to take the necessary steps to implement the dissolution of the Donald J. Trump Foundation, saying that it operated "at essentially no cost for decades, with 100 percent of the money going to charity."

"The foundation has done enormous good works over the years in contributing millions of dollars to countless worthy groups, including supporting veterans, law enforcement officers and children," he said in a statement.

"I will be devoting so much time and energy to the presidency and solving the many problems facing our country and the world. I don't want to allow good work to be associated with a possible conflict of interest," he said.

Trump said he will pursue philanthropic efforts in other ways, but he didn't elaborated on how he'd do so.

The Democratic National Committee criticized Trump for what it called "a wilted fig leaf to cover up his remaining conflicts of interest and his pitiful record of charitable giving."

The statement from party spokesman Eric Walker also took a jab at the president-elect over his controversial business holdings: "Shuttering a charity is no substitute for divesting from his for-profit business and putting the assets in a blind trust—the only way to guarantee separation between the Trump administration and the Trump business."

A 2015 tax return posted on the nonprofit monitoring website GuideStar shows the Donald J. Trump Foundation acknowledged that it used money or assets in violation of IRS regulations—not only during 2015, but in prior years.

Those regulations prohibit self-dealing by the charity. That's broadly defined as using its money or assets to benefit Trump, his family, his companies or substantial contributors to the foundation.

The tax filing doesn't provide details on the violations. Whether Trump benefited from the foundation's spending has been the subject of an investigation by New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman.

In September, Schneiderman disclosed that his office has been investigating Trump's charity to determine whether it has abided by state laws governing nonprofits.

Anti-refugee sentiment from election spills over to states

HELENA, Mont. (AP)—The push to restrict refugee resettlements and immigration in the U.S. that figured so prominently in Donald Trump's election is now headed to states that are preparing to convene their legislative sessions early next year, immigration advocates said.

In Montana, which took in just nine refugee families from January to early December, about a dozen bill requests related to refugees, immigration and terrorism have been filed ahead of next month's session. The measures include requiring resettlement agencies to carry insurance that would defray the cost of prosecuting refugees who commit violent crimes and allowing towns and cities to request a moratorium on resettlements in their communities.

Refugee rights advocates say those measures are a sign of what is to come as the anti-refugee rhetoric that featured prominently in the presidential election spills over to statehouses and local governments.

"It's pretty widely known that this is going to be a hard year for those of us who are seeking to protect the rights of refugees and immigrants," said S.K. Rossi, advocacy and policy director for the ACLU of Montana.

The president-elect campaigned on building a border wall with Mexico to stop illegal immigration, deporting immigrants who are in the nation illegally and halting the resettlement of refugees to strengthen the federal program that vets them.

Some down-ticket conservative candidates took Trump's cue and integrated the anti-refugee platform into their campaigns. Montana Rep. Ryan Zinke, for example, spoke multiple times about the possibility of child terrorists slipping into the U.S.

Empowered by the issue's prominence, anti-immigrant groups have state and local governments in their sights as targets to push restrictive measures in addition to whatever changes may happen at the federal level, said Michele McKenzie, deputy director of the Minneapolis organization The Advocates for Human Rights.

That would lead to further manipulation of the deeply visceral fear of newcomers to the U.S. that was exposed during the election campaigns, McKenzie said.

"It absolutely does not end with the presidential election," McKenzie said. "It's a national strategy by a small but organized group of anti-immigration advocates and anti-refugee advocates."

Asia

Typhoon kills 4, destroys homes in PH

BATANGAS, Philippines (AP)—A powerful typhoon that spoiled Christmas Day in parts of the Philippines, leaving at least four people dead and destroying homes, roared over a congested region near Manila on Monday with slightly weaker but still-fierce winds, officials said.

Typhoon Nock-Ten cut power to five provinces at the height of Christmas celebrations and displaced tens of thousands of villagers and travelers in Asia's largest Catholic nation.

A farmer died after being pinned by a fallen tree in Quezon province and three other villagers, including a couple who were swept by a flash flood, died in Albay province, southeast of Manila, after the typhoon made landfall in Casiguran province Sunday night, police said.

Nock-Ten, locally known as Nina, then blew westward across mountainous and island provinces, damaging homes, uprooting trees and knocking down communications.

Although it had weakened slightly, the typhoon still had sustained winds of up to 130 kilometers (80 miles) per hour and gusts of 215 kph (133 mph), government forecasters said, as it blew over the heavily populated provinces of Batangas and Cavite, south of Manila, on Monday morning. It was expected to exit over the South China Sea later in the day.

AP

A police car is parked along a flooded street caused by rains from Typhoon Nock-Ten as vendors selling handicrafts including Christmas decorations clean rubbish in Quezon city, north of Manila, Philippines on Monday, Dec. 26, 2016.

A cargo ship with an unspecified number of crewmen radioed for help as their vessel started to sink off Batangas, while another ran aground and turned on its side in a beach below a mountain in the province's Mabini town, the coast guard said. The coast guard sent vessels to rescue the crewmen of both ships.

The storm was one of the strongest to hit the Philippines since Typhoon Haiyan left more than 7,300 people dead or missing and displaced over 5 million in 2014. But officials in some provinces found it difficult to convince people to abandon their Christmas celebrations and head for the shelters before the storm hit. Some officials said they had to impose forced evacuations.

"Some residents just refused to leave their homes even when I warned them that you can face what amounts to a death penalty," Cedric Daep, a top disaster-response official in Albay, said by phone.

Shopping malls and stores were ordered to close early on Christmas Day to encourage people to remain indoors, "but at the height of the typhoon, many cars were still being driven around and people were out walking," Daep said. "We warned them enough, but we just can't control their mind."

Officials in Albay, where more than 150,000 villagers were displaced by the typhoon, declared a "state of calamity" on Sunday to allow faster disbursement of emergency funds.

About 20 typhoons and storms lash the Philippines each year. In the past 65 years, seven typhoons have struck the country on Christmas Day, according to the government's weather agency.

Japan ex-PM Yoshida's forgotten Pearl Harbor visit recounted

TOKYO (AP)—Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who will visit Pearl Harbor with President Barack Obama on Tuesday, wasn't even born when Japan's former leader Shigeru Yoshida went there just six years after the country's World War II surrender, by himself and feeling awkward.

Yoshida is best remembered for signing the San Francisco peace treaty with the U.S. and others in 1951, allowing Japan back into international society after its war defeat. His Pearl Harbor visit, which he made on his way home from San Francisco, was largely eclipsed by the historic treaty.

Archival writings and photos unearthed by The Associated Press reconstruct Yoshida's visit, from his aim to win U.S. trust to how he was put at ease by the U.S. Navy commander's dog.

Yoshida arrived at Pearl Harbor on Sept. 12, 1951, shortly after requesting a courtesy visit to the office of Adm. Arthur W.R. Radford, commander of the U.S. Pacific fleet. The office overlooked Pearl Harbor, offering a direct view of the site of the Japanese attack of Dec. 7, 1941.

Radford recalled that he thought Yoshida might feel uncomfortable because of his office's location. "I could almost see the wreck of Arizona" out of the window, he wrote in his memoir, "From Pearl Harbor to Vietnam," referring to a battleship that sank in the attack.

Yoshida, westernized and fluent in English, showed up in a white suit, wearing his trademark brimmed hat and carrying a cane, apparently looking a bit stiff.

Then Radford's dog broke the ice.

His little Scottish Terrier, which was stretched out in front of Radford's desk, walked slowly to Yoshida to be patted, while sniffing around his shoes and ankles.

"That started a dog conversation that took most of the visit," Radford wrote.

Yoshida was a dog fancier, and had bought terrier puppies just before leaving San Francisco, his grandson Taro Aso, currently Japan's finance minister, has said. Yoshida named the pair "San" and "Fran" after his successful trip.

Years later, Yoshida told Radford's wife how he was embarrassed when he walked into the office after seeing Pearl Harbor, and how happy he was that the dog was able to settle him down.

A Navy archival photo obtained by the AP shows the two men shaking hands, with a smiling Yoshida looking up at the much taller Radford. Yoshida spent about 20 minutes at the office, according to an AP story from Sept. 13, 1951.

Yoshida's visit to Pearl Harbor was actually on his second Hawaii stopover, having stopped there on his way to San Francisco as well.

World

Choir tragedy: A look at Russian ensemble wiped out by crash

MOSCOW (AP)—The Russian military choir that lost most of its singers in a plane crash Sunday is often described as the Kremlin's "singing weapon."

The Alexandrov Ensemble, sometimes referred to as the Red Army choir, was founded in the 1920s. It won global fame with its patriotic repertoire during Soviet times, but in recent years has sought to cater to modern audiences. Many of its performances have gone viral, including a rousing rendition of Daft Punk's "Get Lucky" by singers in full military dress at the opening of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi.

Sixty-four members of the ensemble, including director Valery Khalilov, were heading from Sochi to Russia's air base in Syria to perform a New Year's concert for troops when their plane crashed into the Black Sea on Sunday. All 92 people on board are presumed dead.

"It's difficult to grasp the scale of that tragedy," Moscow city's culture department head Alexander Kibovsky said in televised remarks. "They were raising pride for our culture, our country, across the entire world."

As word of the crash spread Sunday, people placed bouquets of flowers outside the ensemble's Moscow headquarters.

"We all loved this ensemble," said Moscow resident Mark Novikov. "We valued it. They are our brothers, our friends, our colleagues."

The 186-member ensemble includes a band and a dancing troupe along with the choir that had about 70 singers. Viktor Yeliseyev, head of the rival choir of the Russian National Guard, said most of the Alexandrov Ensemble's singers were on the plane.

Among the few who stayed back was soloist Vadim Ananyev, whose wife just delivered a baby and pleaded with him to remain at home to help. The couple has three small children.

"I feel as if I were hit over the head," he said. "I still can't believe it. They are telling me now I was born with a silver spoon."

The Interfax news agency said another member of the choir was denied access to board at the last minute because his foreign passport has expired.

The choir was founded in 1928 by composer and conductor Alexander Alexandrov, and after his death in 1946 was led by his son, Boris Alexandrov. Alexandrov, who headed the choir for more than 40 years, made it famous worldwide.

Pavel Kogan, the director of Moscow State Academic Symphonic Orchestra, described the choir as "a symbol of the country."

"It was impossible to imagine what happened, even in a nightmare," he said, according to Snob online publication.

Israel's Netanyahu lashes out at Obama over UN vote

JERUSALEM (AP)—Israel's prime minister lashed out at President Barack Obama on Saturday, accusing him of a "shameful ambush" at the United Nations over West Bank settlements and saying he is looking forward to working with his "friend" President-elect Donald Trump.

Benjamin Netanyahu's comments came a day after the United States broke with past practice and allowed the U.N. Security Council to condemn Israeli settlements in the West Bank and east Jerusalem as a "flagrant violation" of international law.

Although the U.S. opposes the settlements, it has traditionally used its veto power as a permanent member of the Security Council to block resolutions condemning Israel, saying that disputes between Israel and the Palestinians must be resolved through negotiations.

Welcomed by the Palestinians, the resolution, while mostly symbolic, could hinder Israel's negotiating position in future peace talks.

Trump also condemned the U.N. vote Saturday, taking to Twitter to say it "will make it much harder to negotiate peace." But, he added, "we will get it done anyway."

A year ago, Trump told The Associated Press that he wanted to be "very neutral" on Israel-Palestinian issues, but his comments became much more pro-Israel as the race progressed and he took a sharp tone against the Palestinians.

Netanyahu said the U.S abstention was "in complete contrast" to U.S. commitments—including one that he said Obama made in 2011—not to impose conditions for a final agreement on Israel at the Security Council. "The Obama administration conducted a shameful anti-Israel ambush at the U.N.," Netanyahu said.

The White House declined to comment on Netanyahu's criticism.

The U.S. and much of the international community consider Israel's settlements in the West Bank and east Jerusalem as an obstacle to peace. Netanyahu rejects such claims, blaming the failure of peace efforts on the Palestinian refusal to recognize Israel's Jewish identity.

The decision to abstain from vote was one of the biggest American rebukes of its long-standing ally in recent memory and marked a final chapter in the icy relations between Netanyahu and Obama over the last eight years.

Netanyahu called the decision "distorted" but said Israel will overcome it.

He said he had spoken with U.S leaders, both Democrats and Republicans, who vowed to fight the move, including he said, from Israel's "friend" in the incoming administration, the president-elect.

Syrian president visits Christian orphanage on Christmas Day

BEIRUT (AP)—Syrian President Bashar Assad has visited a Christian orphanage near the capital Damascus on Christmas Day.

Photographs posted on the Syrian presidency's Facebook page showed the president along with his wife, Asma, standing with nuns and orphans in the Damascus suburb of Sednaya.

In the northern city of Aleppo, Christians celebrated Christmas for the first time in four years with the country's largest city now under full control of government forces.

The rebel withdrawal from east Aleppo last week marked Assad's biggest victory since Syria's crisis began in 2011.

Christians, one of the largest religious minorities at about 10 percent of Syria's pre-war 23 million-strong population, have tried to stay on the sidelines of the conflict. However, the opposition's increasingly outspoken Islamism has kept many leaning toward Assad's government.

Overdrive

Auto review: GMC Acadia slimmer, trimmer—and now more agile, too

By BARRY SPYKER
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

More than a few folks may be pondering GMC's gamble to send its hefty midsize SUV, the Acadia, to the fitness center to shed a few, or 700, pounds. Heaven knows how long this vehicle was on the treadmill because it also came back 7.2 inches shorter and 3.5 inches narrower.

In fact, the shrinkage even made it possible for GMC to offer a four-cylinder option — a first for Acadia — though it's doubtful many will opt for that engine choice.

And though the top-to-bottom overhaul may elicit a few frowns, the changes were based on consumer surveys and will better position the second-generation Acadia to compete with the leaner Honda Pilot and Toyota Highlander.

The model starts with a softer look that is more crossover SUV, less truck, and features new lighting arrangements in the front and rear.

Perhaps more important is what Acadia's trim new physique achieves on the road: improvements in handling and maneuverability. A shorter wheelbase and tighter turning radius make it easier to park and pull sharp U-turns when needed.

Electric-assisted steering provides quick feedback, and a new independent suspension enables Acadia to absorb road bumps without surrendering much road feel.

Move up to the top-line Denali and get more drive options with a terrain selector dial that allows adjustments to throttle response, steering, transmission shift points, plus settings for mud and off-road. The new All-Terrain trim adds an Active Twin Clutch system that can send power to wheels getting the best traction.

Two engines are available, one of them a 2.5-liter 4-cylinder that puts out 194 horsepower. That's not much oomph — they could have at least turbocharged the little sucker — but it still may be enough with the newly svelte Acadia and for folks who aren't going to tax the vehicle.

Still, the popular choice will be the 3.6-liter V-6 that's good for 310 horses and 271 pound-feet of pull. That's enough to climb the hills and still tow along up to 4,000 pounds (1,200 less than the 2016).

A six-speed transmission distributes the power smoothly. A couple of more gears might have upped the mileage figures, which are EPA-estimated at 18 mpg for the city, 25 mpg on the highway and a combined 20 mpg. But even that's 2 mpg better than last year thanks to an active cylinder management system that shuts down two of the cylinders when they're not needed.

For all its contraction, Acadia still offers plenty of family room across three rows, seating up to seven. Overall volume is down, of course: Cargo space dips from 19.6 cubic feet to 12.8, but, fortunately, second and third rows do fold flat. And, there are cubbies galore, including two under-floor bins and a handy drawer that pulls out from the center console.

Front-seat space is ample, and captain's chairs that slide and recline are optional for the second row. Seats in the third are low to the floor and best for kids or younger, more limber adults.

A revamped dash, adorned with real wood and aluminum trim on the Denali, has user-friendly dials and controls. An 8-inch touchsceen offers Apple CarPlay and Android Auto capability, plus a new system lets you download your own apps, too.

Among Acadia's safety technology is something startling: the Safety Alert Seat. It's an industry first and it sounds a warning to check back rows for any children left behind. It only signals the driver if the rear doors had been opened earlier.

2017 GMC Acadia All Terrain TNS

Also included are more common tech-safety features like surround-view camera (the seat buzzes the driver if something is in the way), adaptive cruise, blind-spot alert and collision warning and mitigation with pedestrian braking.

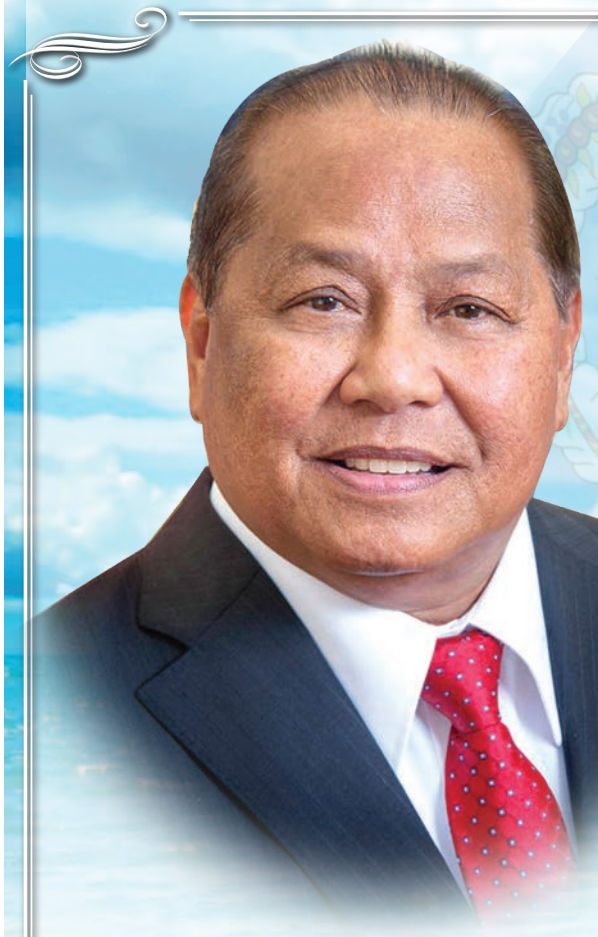
No question, Acadia is a reborn animal. If you liked the extra heft and power, you might want to shop around. But most, who enjoyed Acadia's comfort, versatility and family features, will be gratified with this lighter, leaner generation.

NUTS & BOLTS

2017 GMC Acadia Denali

- **MSRP:** $46,920
- **As tested:** $52,285
- **What's all the excitement about?** Second-generation GMC Acadia Denali is leaner, more compact and agile
- **Powertrain:** 310-horsepower 3.6-liter V-6 will be the popular choice, but new this year is a 2.5-liter 4-cylinder that gets 194 horsepower
- **How's the performance?** Strong acceleration, smooth and comfortable, plus more maneuverable with its shorter wheelbase
- **What about fuel economy?** 20 mpg combined (25 highway, 18 city)

FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY



Missing You

We're missing you a little more
Each time we hear your name,
We've cried so many tears
Yet our heart's broken just the same.
We miss our times together
Things in common we could share.
But nothing fills the emptiness
Now you're no longer there.
We've so many precious memories
To last our whole life through
Each one of them reminders
Of how much we're missing you.

†EULOGIO (ELOY) SONGAO INOS

Born to Life on September 26, 1949
Called to his Eternal Life by our Dear Lord on Monday, December 28, 2015

We, the children, respectfully invite our families and friends to join us in the daily Eucharistic Celebration to be offered in memory of our beloved father beginning Tuesday, December 20, 2016 through Tuesday, December 27th, 2016, 6:00am at Mount Carmel Cathedral. On Wednesday, December 28, 2016, rosary will be said at 5:30pm followed by the Eucharistic Celebration at 6:00pm at Saint Jude Church.

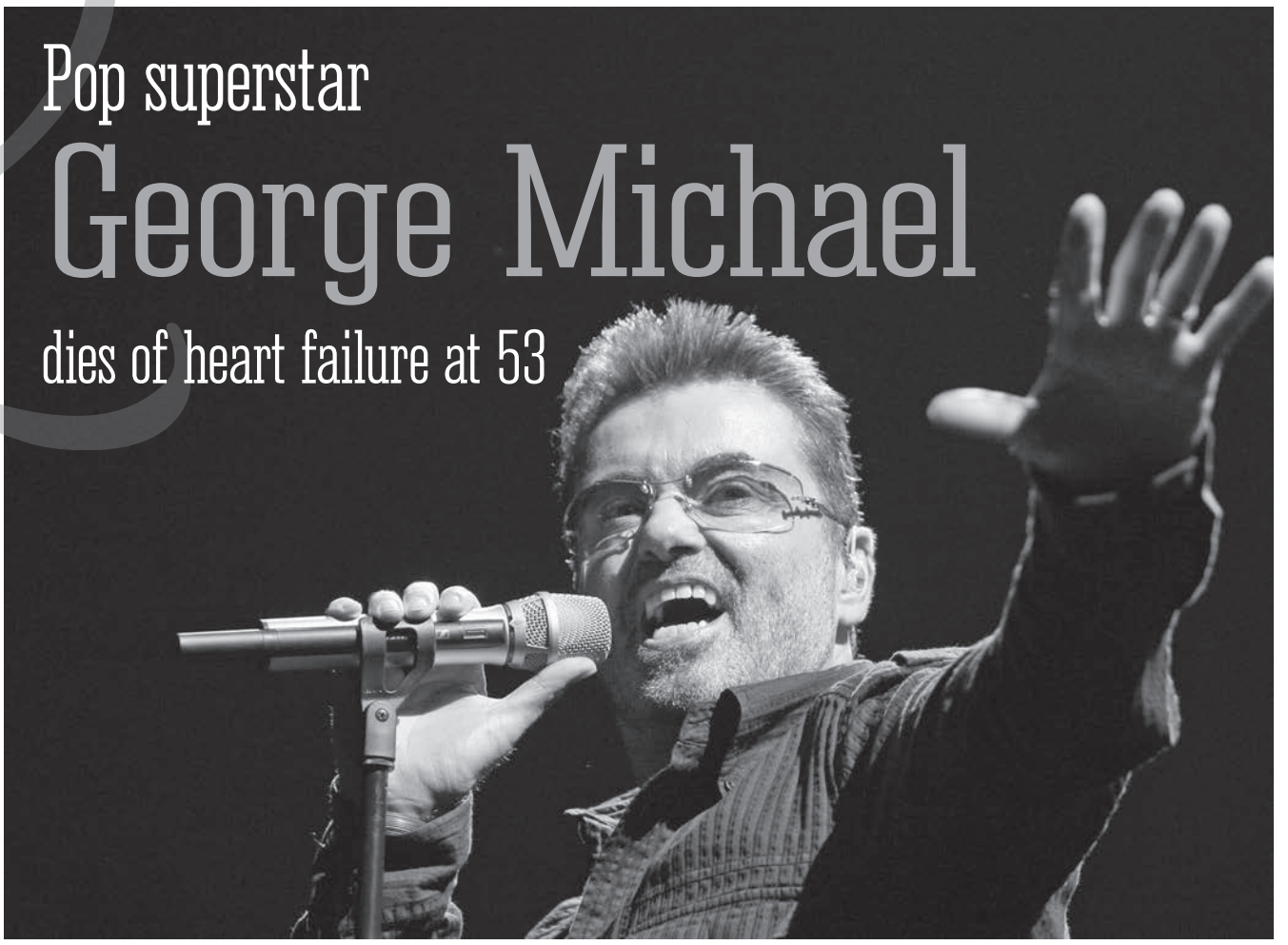
Your thoughts, presence and most especially your prayers are sincerely appreciated.

Un Dangkulu na Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Ghilisow and Thank You

THE CHILDREN

Life & Style

Pop superstar George Michael dies of heart failure at 53



AP
In this June 25, 2008, file photo, singer George Michael performs during his "Live Global Tour" concert in Inglewood, Calif.

LONDON (AP)—George Michael's moment of liberation followed what seemed at first to be a time of deep humiliation.

He was blessed with extreme good looks and an exquisite voice, attributes he used to become first a teenybopper heartthrob and then a mature solo artist with videos that played up his considerable appeal to the opposite sex. He kept his own sexual preference private, until he was arrested in 1998 for lewd conduct in a public toilet in Los Angeles after being spotted by a male undercover police officer.

In an earlier era, that might have doomed his career. Instead of retreating, however, he made a single and video—"Outside"—that ridiculed the charges against him and mocked the Los Angeles police officers who busted him.

Everyone remembers the image of the two uniformed policemen kissing in the video—it was both funny and outrageous at the time—and the image helped Michael come out as a proud gay man. He was unashamed, unapologetic and ready to poke fun at himself even as he produced a steady stream of hits.

But Michael, whose death from heart failure at 53 was announced Sunday, struggled in his later years, fighting a number of health issues and substance abuse problems. His voice remained golden—at times it seemed there was almost no limit to his range—but his behavior in public became ever more erratic.

Despite his great talent, he never found a niche for himself as a senior statesman of the rock world. His fans stuck with him despite it all, and many expected one more comeback. People rooted for Michael, even as they felt he was slipping away, giving in to his torment.

Michael shot to stardom at an early age in the teen duo WHAM! and moved smoothly into a solo career. It was a classic showbiz story—a lad named Georgios Panayiotou with strong Greek Cypriot roots takes the name George Michael and forms a band with Andrew Ridgeley that brings him wealth and worldwide fame.

The photos and videos from that era show Michael with long locks, piercing eyes and a cheerful, show-stopping smile. He was made for MTV, which was emerging as a dominant force, and he had a powerful video presence, borrowing some of his dance moves from Elvis Presley and sometimes styling himself as a motorcycle rebel who would have made James Dean or Marlon Brando proud.

He seemed to be on top of the world when he graduated from WHAM! and started scoring his own hits, but later said he was struggling with his sexuality and remembers his late 20s as a very depressing period.

The AIDS crisis was hitting the gay community extremely hard at the time, and he lost one partner to the disease. He said it took him several years to recover.

"I had my very first relationship at 27 because I really had not actually come to terms with my sexuality until I was 24," he said. "I lost my partner to HIV then it took about three years to grieve; then after that I lost my mother. I felt almost like I was cursed."

He was unsettled and unhappy and, at the same time, became that rare artist who enjoys both chart success and tremendous respect from his peers. He sold well over 100 million albums, walked away from awards dinners weighed down with trophies, and recorded duets with the giants in his field.

The long list of people who recorded with Michael includes all-time greats: Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles, Luciano Pavarotti and Elton John, for starters. Their willingness to share the spotlight was a sure sign of the way Michael's talents were appreciated by fellow musicians.

Critics generally viewed his WHAM! songs as catchy but disposable pop and gave his solo efforts far higher marks. His first solo album, 1987's "Faith," sold more than 20 million copies, and he enjoyed several hit singles including the raunchy "I Want Your Sex," which was boosted by a provocative video that received wide airplay on MTV.

The song was controversial not only because of its explicit nature, but also because it was seen as encouraging casual sex and promiscuity at a time when the AIDS epidemic was at its height. Michael and his management tried to tamp down this point of view by having the singer write "Explore Monogamy" on the leg and back of a model in the video.

His career was peaking, but a protracted legal dispute with his record company Sony took a toll.

As the hits slowed, he became better known for health scares and brushes with the police, many of them stemming from a series of driving-under-the-influence-of-drugs incidents, including several crashes. He was fond of marijuana and prescription sedatives—the dangerous combination had an effect on his driving, and several times he was found slumped over his car's steering wheel, not moving.

Some made jokes about his erratic driving, but the underlying problems were serious. His driver's license was finally revoked for five years in 2010 after Michael drove his Land Rover into the side of a Snappy Snap photo shop with so much force that his vehicle dented the wall.

A witty passer-by remembering Michael's early career wrote the word WHAM on the spot his SUV had hit.

Best wishes flow in for 'Star Wars' star Carrie Fisher

NEW YORK (AP)—Tributes and well-wishes poured in for "Star Wars" actress Carrie Fisher, who was spending Christmas Eve in a Los Angeles hospital after suffering a medical emergency on a flight the day before.

"Princess Leia can survive anything!" wrote one fan on Twitter. "Hold on, Carrie Fisher. We're taking you into 2017 with us," wrote another. Her "Star Wars" co-star Mark Hamill said he was "sending all our love."

Todd Fisher, the actress' brother, said Friday night that his sister is receiving excellent care, but that he could not classify her condition. He had earlier told The Associated Press that she had been stabilized and was out of the emergency room. In a subsequent interview he said many details about her condition or what caused the medical emergency are unknown.

Fans on Twitter hoped she would pull through. One wrote: "Carrie Fisher survived alcoholism, addiction, depression, bipolar disorder & 60 years in Hollywood. If anyone can survive 2016, it's her." The actress' former co-star Peter Mayhew, who played "Star Wars" character Chewbacca, called her "everyone's favorite princess right now."

And Harrison Ford, who played Han Solo opposite Fisher, in a statement said: "I'm shocked and saddened to hear the news about my dear friend. Our thoughts are with Carrie, her family and friends."

Fisher, 60, experienced medical trouble during a Friday flight from London and was treated by paramedics immediately after the plane landed in Los Angeles, according to reports citing unnamed sources.

Celebrity website TMZ, which first reported the incident, said anonymous sources told them the actress suffered a heart attack.

Todd Fisher said much of what had been reported about the incident was speculation.

"We have to wait and be patient," he said. "We have so little information ourselves."

Fisher's publicists and representatives for her mother, Debbie Reynolds, and her daughter, Billie Lourd, did not return calls from the AP.

Los Angeles Fire Department spokesman Erik Scott said paramedics administered advanced life-saving care to a patient at Los Angeles International Airport on Friday and transported the person to a nearby hospital. He did not identify the patient.

REACTIONS

NEW YORK (AP)—Reactions to the death of superstar George Michael, who died Sunday at his home at age 53:

"I have lost a beloved friend—the kindest, most generous soul and a brilliant artist. My heart goes out to his family and all of his fans."—**Elton John**, on Instagram.

"Farewell My Friend! ... Another Great Artist leaves us."—**Madonna**, on Twitter.

"Heartbroken at the loss of my beloved friend Yog. Me, his loved ones, his friends, the world of music, the world at large. 4ever loved. A xx"—Michael's Wham! groupmate **Andrew Ridgeley** on Twitter. Yog stands for "Yours Only George."

"My heart, like yours, is broken. George Michael was a musical genius and I am so grateful to have known him. In a world that needs music more than ever, today it is less so."—**Liza Minnelli**, on Facebook.

"I've loved George Michael for as long as I can remember. He was an absolute inspiration. Always ahead of his time."—**James Corden,** actor, comedian and host of Carpool Karaoke, on Twitter.

"Absolutely devastated to hear of the loss of @GeorgeMichael Truly brilliant talent #sad #sad #sad"—from Twitter account for **Martin Fry of band ABC**.

"This is so crazy. I was just at his house the morning of the 23rd. So crazy."—producer-musician **Nile Rodgers**, on Twitter.

"Can't believe George Michael has passed ... one of the greatest singers and writers the UK ever produced. I'm really saddened ... a lovely man."—singer **Howard Jones**, on Twitter.

Other than a global pop phenom, George Michael was one of the true British soul greats. A lot of us owe him an unpayable debt. bye George xx"—producer-musician **Mark Ronson**, on Twitter.

"I met George Michael a few times & he was ever a gentle, unassuming soul. A rare presence in a world full of self. Honest, genuine talent."—singer-songwriter **Alison Moyet**, on Twitter.

"It's hard to take in. One of our most talented singer songwriters has left us. RIP George Michael. Such sad, tragic news. 2016 please end."—pop group **Simply Red**, on Twitter.

Military helping kids follow Santa's fabled flight

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (AP)—Children from around the world are calling the North American Aerospace Defense Command to ask where Santa is, and they're getting a cheery answer about the mythical route.

The wildly popular NORAD Tracks Santa operation is on its 61st run at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado. Volunteers are answering phone calls and emails and posting updates about Santa's storybook world tour on Facebook and Twitter.

Navy Lt. Cmdr. Paul Noel said 1,500 volunteers answered nearly 141,000 phone calls and more than 2,800 emails last year. The NORAD spokesman is quick to say his name really is Noel.

Here's a look at the Christmas tradition:

In this Dec. 24, 2014, file photo, volunteers take phone calls from children asking where Santa is and when he will deliver presents to their house, during the annual NORAD Tracks Santa Operation, at the North American Aerospace Defense Command, or NORAD, at Peterson Air Force Base, in Colorado Springs, Colo. AP

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Children can call a toll-free number, 877-446-6723 (877-Hi-NORAD), or email noradtracksanta@outlook.com to ask where Santa is on his fabled journey.

Volunteers work in shifts, taking the last calls at 3 a.m. MST Christmas Day.

The volunteers sit elbow-to-elbow in conference rooms at Peterson Air Force Base, NORAD's home, answering phones and checking computer-generated maps projected onto big screens. First lady Michelle Obama traditionally answers calls via a remote hookup, but Noel said it was not yet known if she would participate this year.

Elsewhere at the Air Force base, volunteers update NORAD's website (www.noradsanta.org), Facebook page (facebook.com/noradsanta) and Twitter feed (@NoradSanta).

Last year, the website had 22 million unique visitors, Noel said.

WHY DOES NORAD 'TRACK' SANTA?

It started in 1955 when a Colorado Springs newspaper ad invited children to call Santa Claus but accidentally listed the number for the hotline at the Continental Air Defense Command, NORAD's predecessor.

Air Force Col. Harry Shoup took a call from a child and thought he was being pranked. When he figured out he was talking to a little boy, he pretended he was Santa.

More children called, and Shoup instructed airmen to play along.

It's now a tradition, beloved by kids and the military. Volunteers range from generals and admirals to enlisted men and women, who sometimes report for telephone duty in military uniform and a Santa hat.

WHAT IS NORAD?

The North American Aerospace Defense Command is a joint U.S.-Canada operation that defends the sky over both nations and monitors sea approaches. It's best known for its Cold War-era control room deep inside Cheyenne Mountain—now used only as a backup—and for NORAD Tracks Santa.

16-year-old pivots from a Kenyan slum to the ballet stage

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — In a country not usually associated with classical ballet, a 16-year-old dancer leaps onto the stage, his gravity-defying turns taking the audience's breath away.

Joel Kioko is arguably Kenya's most promising young ballet dancer. Currently training in the United States, he has come home for Christmas—and is dancing a solo in a Nairobi production of "The Nutcracker" while he's here.

"He's the real deal," said Dance Centre Kenya's artistic director, Cooper Rust. "I'm pushing him to go for the stars. Paris Opera, Royal Ballet, here we come! Even if Joel ends up in a more regional company, it will be incredible."

Kioko grew up in Nairobi's Kuwinda slum and took his first dance class five years ago in a public school classroom, with bare walls, no barre and no mirror, the desks and chairs pushed outside.

Now he's teaching holiday classes to aspiring dancers in Kibera, the Kenyan capital's biggest slum.

"I don't know what I could have done without ballet, without dancing," Kioko said.

"I don't even know if I could have been existing, it's weird to say, but dance, it's everything to me."

His encounter with ballet happened by chance when he was 11. He was discovered by a fellow dance student who at age 14 was teaching a class at his school and told her teacher, Rust, about him.

Ricky Martin thanks fans for support over father's illness

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)—Pop star Ricky Martin thanked his fans Saturday for their support following the hospitalization of his father, Enrique Martin.

The singer issued a statement saying that he is "close to his father along with his nuclear family." Martin asked that people allow the family to deal with the illness in a private manner.

News that the pop star's father was ill emerged in a social media posting early Friday by Martin's brother Eric. He initially described his father's condition as "super bad," but subsequently reported an improvement.

The newspaper El Nuevo Dia reported that Martin was in Puerto Rico with his two sons and boyfriend to spend Christmas with his family when his father became ill.

More foreign Vegas visits don't equal more tips, workers say

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Servers and dealers on the Las Vegas Strip say they're worried that as more foreign visitors hit the restaurants and casinos, they'll receive smaller tips because the tourists are coming from countries like China, where American-style, 20 percent gratuities are uncommon.

"It's very difficult when you're serving or relying on tips and the majority of your guests are foreign. They don't tip you, or they may have a $200 meal and tip you a dollar per person," said Cheryl Holt, who has been a food server on the Strip since 2011.

With a $200 dinner check, Holt said as a server, she'd typically have to pass on about $10 to the rest of the service staff, including a bartender, busser and food runner. If she receives a small tip, Holt said she's paying for those customers to eat at her table.

Holt told the Las Vegas Review-Journal that in her experience, visitors from Canada tend to tip about 10 percent. European tourists give smaller tips and Chinese visitors give about $1 per person.

Hotels and resorts should help educate visitors, perhaps by displaying signs at dealer tables noting that the dealers expect tips, according to Xiaosheng Huang, a Chinese immigration lawyer in Las Vegas.

Theft of prized possessions leaves wife feeling betrayed

DEAR ABBY: I recently realized that my mother-in-law stole several of my prized possessions. It seems that my husband's brothers, who helped us move when we lost our home, took the items (obviously at her request and with her approval) instead of placing them in the storage unit as instructed.

I am furious at her and my husband's brothers. How should I deal with this? I want to confront her and let her know that I am aware of her betrayal, but my husband is a great man, and I hate to hurt him in this process.

When I told him I was aware that his mother had stolen from us, he said he would make it up to me and that his mother is old (she's 81) and I should let it go. However, every time I visit her home and see my things it hurts. How should I deal with this? I feel raped.

FURIOUS IN TENNESSEE

DEAR FURIOUS: If the items are replaceable, let your husband do as he promised. If they are heirlooms, you will either have to wait until she dies to reclaim them or go over there and demand that she give them back.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I am a senior-aged man who swims three times a week at a nearby fitness center. I shower there after each swim. Seldom do I use the shower in my apartment. My son has reprimanded me strongly for not showering daily. He asserted that by not showering every day and by using a public facility when I do, I am practicing "very poor hygiene."

I believe that my hygiene routine is acceptable and in line with common practice, but I'm concerned that in order to visit with him in the future, I will first need to take a shower. Am I wrong here, or is he?

NOT SHOWERING ENOUGH

DEAR NOT SHOWERING: With apologies to William Shakespeare: To shower or not to shower, that is the question: Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of your son's criticism or to stand up for yourself (in a sea of sniping) is up to you.

From where I sit -- far downwind -- if you can pass the smell test, showering three times a week is all that's necessary for proper hygiene. Do not allow your son to shake your self-confidence.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I recently went to a funeral viewing for a friend's adult child whom I had never met. After entering the funeral home, I saw a computer-generated sign stating, "Please understand that we (mom, dad, brother and daughter) just couldn't be here."

Abby, I wasn't there to see the deceased; I was there to express my sympathy to the family. Why bother to have a viewing? All I wanted to say was how sorry I am for their loss.

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

KAREN IN PENNSYLVANIA

DEAR KAREN: Please have a little less judgment and a little more compassion. Remember that not everyone deals with death in the same way. The viewing was for family members, friends and acquaintances of the deceased who COULD bear to be there. You can still express your sympathy to the grieving family by writing them a condolence letter.

■■■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

BOY, IS IT COLD! CAN'T WE TURN THE HEAT UP?
HEAT IS EXPENSIVE, CALVIN. JUST PUT ON A SWEATER.
LOOK, THE THERMOSTAT GOES ALL THE WAY UP TO 90 DEGREES! WE COULD BE SITTING AROUND IN OUR SHORTS!
LEAVE THE THERMOSTAT ALONE, CALVIN.
I CAN ALMOST SEE MY BREATH. I'LL JUST CRANK IT UP TO 75, OK?
I SAID DON'T TOUCH IT!
GEE, MY HANDS ARE SO NUMB, I CAN'T MOVE THE SWITCH. GUESS I'LL PUT ON A SWEATER.
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12-27

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

DON'T YOU LOVE THE SWEATERS MOM MADE FOR US THIS YEAR?
I GUESS
JIM DAVIS 12-27
WHERE'S YOUR SWEATER, ODIE?
NICE
www.facebook.com/garfield
Distributed by Universal Uclick
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Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

WOW. THE SHELVES ARE BARE.
YAH. PEOPLE'R STOCKIN' UP.
HEARD IT'S GONNA BE BAD. ICE. TONS-A SNOW.
I'M JUST GONNA SIT HOME AND STREAM JOHNNY DEPP MOVIES. GERTY LOVES HER SOME JOHNNY DEPP.
AND GERTY IS..?
MY STUPID CAT. I FIND DEPP PREENING AND UNWATCHABLE.
www.gocomics.com
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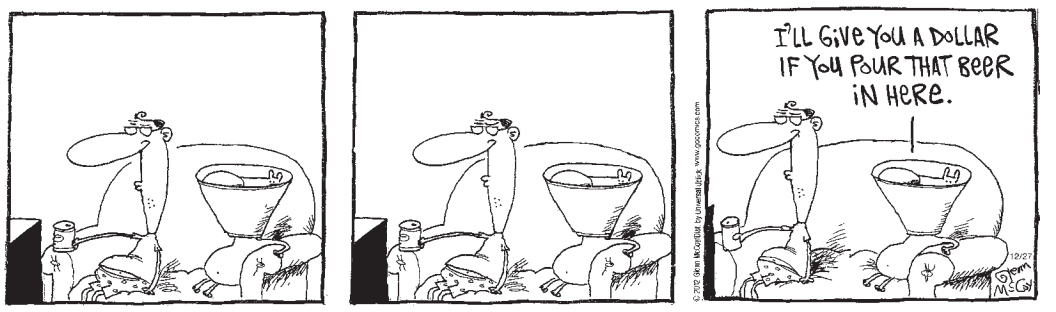
The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

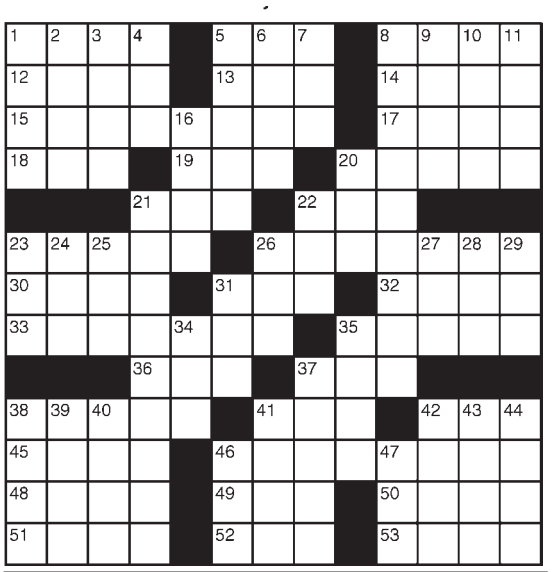
ACROSS
1 Thick chunk
5 Candy-heart word
8 Highland hillside
12 First-rate
13 Kimono sash
14 Boxing arbiters
15 Unpunished
17 Lawman Wyatt
18 Junior
19 Rowing need
20 "Hammerin' Hank"
21 Kenny G's instrument
22 Noah's craft
23 Mover's rental
26 Hidden danger
30 Crooned
31 Lay down the lawn
32 Memory method
33 Italian wine
35 Uses a blowtorch
36 Comic Romano
37 "The Bells" author
38 Taking offense
41 Lair
42 Wood-shaping tool
45 Mr. Stravinsky
46 Totally safe
48 — gin fizz
49 Busy insect
50 Crème — crème
51 Locus
52 Sticky stuff
53 Bar

DOWN
1 Back talk
2 Crazy
3 Shortly
4 Wager
5 Eco-friendly Seuss character
6 Modern taxi rival
7 Compete
8 Escape
9 Caboose
10 Roundish do
11 "Baseball Tonight" channel
16 Young horse
20 Curator's concern
21 Like diet soda
22 Help
23 Trojans' sch.
24 Taunting laugh
25 Blackbird
26 Luau bowlful
27 "You've got mail" co.
28 British "Inc."
29 Guitar master Paul
31 Hog haven
34 Aye undoer
35 Policy expert
37 Green sauce
38 Greet the villain
39 Wrinkly fruit
40 Yard fraction
41 Flintstones' pet
42 Vicinity
43 Sub shop
44 Gusto
46 Joplin tune
47 New Deal pres.

Solution time: 26 mins.

F	A	D	E	D	■	R	I	G	■	A	L	T
C	H	I	L	I	■	I	R	A	■	S	A	Y
C	I	V	I	C	■	B	E	L	L	Y	U	P
■	■	V	E	E	R	E	D	■	A	L	E	E
A	N	Y	■	D	A	Y	■	T	S	A	R	S
T	H	U	S	■	D	E	G	A	S	■	■	■
E	L	P	A	S	O	■	A	P	O	G	E	E
■	■	■	V	I	N	Y	L	■	S	U	E	T
B	A	S	I	S	■	E	L	Y	■	S	K	A
E	C	T	O	■	S	L	O	O	P	S	■	■
H	U	R	R	Y	U	P	■	D	A	Y	A	N
A	T	A	■	A	L	E	■	E	L	U	D	E
R	E	Y	■	M	U	D	■	L	O	P	E	D

Friday's answer 12 - 27



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Hayley Williams, 28; Gerard Depardieu, 68; Cokie Roberts, 73; John Amos, 77.

Happy Birthday: Consider what you want to share and what you don't. Offering personal information to someone who is unpredictable will result in feeling misrepresented. Don't feel the need to bring about change or to set impossible goals. You will avoid conflict and disappointment if you are reliable, responsible and reasonable when dealing with money, health and emotional matters. Your numbers are 9, 13, 22, 28, 36, 45, 47.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): A short trip will change the way you see others or the beliefs you have lived by for so long. A personal change may come as a surprise, but it could also be something that eventually turns out in your favor. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Bargain shop or make vacation plans. The incentive to match your purchases with discipline and hard work will pay off. Personal gains can be made if you remain dedicated to your beliefs as well as to your promises. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): If you want to make an impression or professional gain, put in overtime or update your resume and send it out to interesting online job postings. A partnership will have an impact on the choices you make. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Reach out to the people you have worked with through volunteer service, past employment or someone you met during your school days. A favor will be offered that can help you change direction or get ahead in the new year. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Do things with the younger people in your life and the rewards will be fulfilling. Playing games or helping put things together for someone who can't will put you in the spotlight and boost your popularity. Romance is highlighted. ✪✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): When faced with change, embrace the inevitable and use your intelligence to navigate your way through any situation that requires your undivided attention. A social event or shopping spree will not solve a problem you face. Don't overspend. ✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Short trips, visiting people you love and doing things with family members will enhance your day. Don't let situations going on at home or work create a problem for you. Assess the situation and strategize about how you will handle matters. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Tune out if someone is using emotional blackmail to sway you. Stay fixed on what's important and what you enjoy doing the most. A creative outlet will help you bring about a positive change at home. Take care of your health. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Consider what will make you happy and do whatever it takes to turn your dreams into a reality. Changes can be made if you don't evade the issues that need to be faced in order to move forward. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Rely on your intuition to help you make the best choice. Check the background of anyone offering a deal that is too good to be true. Don't feel the need to follow what others do. Make your own plans and carry on. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Make a difference and lend a helping hand. What you do for others will turn into a rewarding experience for you. A contract, settlement or investment is favored. Plan something romantic for you and that special person in your life. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Tie up loose ends to ensure you head into the new year free of worry. Getting together with peers outside of work or the classroom will give you a chance to build a stronger alliance that can help you in the future. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are astute, determined and original. You are an opportunist and a scholar.

*Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	7		4					3
			8				2	
4			3	6			9	
	9	3						4
		2		9		6		
1						5	8	
	1			8	2			7
	6				1			
7					3		1	

Difficulty Level ★★ 12/27

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Friday's SUDOKU Answer

1	8	9	4	3	6	5	2	7
2	4	7	1	9	5	8	6	3
3	5	6	7	8	2	4	1	9
4	7	2	6	5	8	9	3	1
5	6	3	2	1	9	7	4	8
8	9	1	3	7	4	2	5	6
9	2	4	8	6	1	3	7	5
7	1	8	5	2	3	6	9	4
6	3	5	9	4	7	1	8	2

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 12/23

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

ENDOCRINOLOGISTS **Solution: 10 letters**

M	E	N	O	P	A	U	S	E	E	U	S	S	I	T
S	S	O	O	S	H	P	E	G	E	L	L	O	C	T
I	O	I	E	I	E	Y	H	S	D	N	A	L	G	S
T	N	T	D	O	T	C	S	F	S	E	N	S	E	I
N	G	P	C	I	R	A	N	I	O	C	E	O	N	T
A	A	R	H	A	O	G	R	A	C	O	R	R	E	N
G	I	O	E	T	D	R	A	I	L	I	D	U	T	E
I	D	S	M	S	W	I	Y	N	P	A	A	E	I	I
G	E	B	I	E	R	O	A	H	S	S	B	N	C	C
R	I	A	S	T	A	U	R	B	T	U	E	S	S	S
P	E	P	T	I	D	E	O	G	E	R	G	R	T	L
T	H	O	R	M	O	N	E	C	L	T	E	A	I	E
E	S	T	Y	C	I	R	T	A	I	D	E	P	R	E
I	M	A	G	E	N	I	E	T	O	R	P	S	Y	P
D	I	S	O	R	D	E	R	S	T	R	E	S	S	H

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Absorption, Adrenal, Balance, Chemistry, College, Course, Diabetes, Diagnose, Diet, Disorders, Food, Genetics, Gigantism, Glands, Growth, Hormone, Hyperthyroidism, Image, Labs, Menopause, Neuro, Organs, Pediatric, Peptide, Physician, Protein, Research, Respiration, Scientist, Sense, Sleep, Stress, Sugar, Test, Tissue, Treat

Last Friday's Answer: Socialize

To purchase **THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volume 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46 or 47**, order online at www.WonderWordBooks.com. (Contains 43 puzzles.)

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Skilled Carpenters and Masons with CW-1 issued or approved from October 2016 up to present. 5 years experience required. $7/hour

Please call 989-2600 or 483-8729

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JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

(01) NURSE SUPERVISOR

- Must pass NCLEX-RN and current CNMI RN License
- Attended a hemodialysis training program and management of hemodialysis inpatient and outpatient care
- At least four years hemodialysis experience and plus three years as a charge nurse in dialysis.
- Certified Nephrology Nurse (CNN) – Preferably
- In-Service train with Baxter Phoenix Machine
- Experience with Ameriwater Bicarbonate distribution system
- Certification in Basic Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
- English language skills-proficient in verbal, written and comprehension
- Must hold a Bachelor of Science in Nursing
- Must be flexible with time schedule.

Interested applicants must submit or pick up application at St. Jude Renal Care Facility Inc., in Chalan Kiya, Saipan. Deadline to submit application will be on December 30, 2016 at 4:00 p.m. For more information, please call (670) 234-2901 ext. 128

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Opening Date: December 19, 2016
Closing Date: January 6, 2017

Position: **Accountant I**
Salary: **PL 32-1, $24,889.35 to PL 32-4, $28,807.51 per annum**
(Starting salary will be determined by the qualifications of the appointee.)

Job Location: NMHC Central Office, Garapan, Saipan, MP 96950

Detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information may be picked up, together with NMHC's employment application form, during regular working hours at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan during regular working hours, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except CNMI and austerity holidays.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

Applicants are requested to submit their original application and supporting documents to the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, no later than 4:30 p.m., Friday, January 6, 2017, **OR MAILED AND POSTMARKED** no later than January 6, 2017, to the Corporate Director, Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, P. O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Ms. Jocelyn C. Seman, Office Manager at (670) 234-9447/7689 or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net. NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/ **JESSE S. PALACIOS**
Corporate Director

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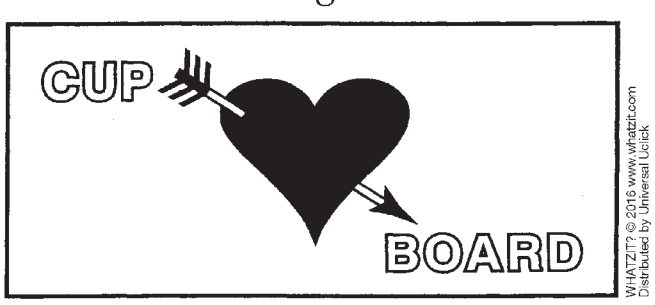

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Irving clutch against Warriors again as Cavs win

CLEVELAND (AP)—With another clutch shot, Kyrie Irving took the Warriors on a trip down memory lane.

Irving dropped a short, turnaround jumper over Klay Thompson with 3.4 seconds left as the Cleveland Cavaliers rallied just the way they did in June's NBA Finals to defeat Golden State 109-108 on Sunday in a marquee Christmas matchup that more than lived up to the hype.

Down by 14 early in the fourth quarter, the Cavs chipped away and then put the ball in the hands of Irving, whose stepback 3-pointer over Stephen Curry on June 19 helped seal Game 7 and gave Cleveland its first major pro sports championship since 1964.

This time, Irving went deep in the lane before spinning and making his shot over Thompson, one of the league's best defenders.

"The kid is special," LeBron James said of his teammate. "It was never in doubt."

Golden State had one last chance but Kevin Durant, who led all scorers with 36 points in his first game in the league's hottest rivalry, lost his balance coming off a screen and couldn't get off a shot as time expired.

Durant felt he was fouled by Richard Jefferson.

"I was trying to make a move," he said. "I didn't fall on my own."

James scored 31 points with a season-high 13 rebounds, Irving added 25 points and Kevin Love 20 for the Cavs, who were down 3-1 in the Finals before storming back to stun a Warriors team that won 73 games during the regular season, but came up one victory short of winning their second straight title.

Thompson added 24, Draymond Green 16 and Curry 15—on 4 of 11 shooting—for the Warriors, who had their winning streak stopped at seven and fell to 9-1 against Eastern Conference teams.

The biggest present under the tree for basketball fans this holiday was filled with drama, intensity and more than a few moments that sparked reminders of last season's brilliant Finals.

"'It lived up to what everyone wanted it to," James said.

Irving drained a 3 from the wing that looked a lot like the one he made on June 19, but his bucket over Thompson had a higher degree of difficulty.

"That's a really hard shot," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "I thought Klay played tremendous defense. You don't do anything different."

The Warriors set up a game-winning chance for Durant, but he stumbled with pressure applied by Jefferson and fell to the floor and watched helplessly as Cleveland's fans roared and Cavs coach Tyronn Lue clapped and screamed.

"We all think we're fouled on every play in every single game," Jefferson said. "That's why I say I know the referees have a very hard job. I switched to his body. He looked like he lost his balance. He was trying to regain his balance and as soon as I saw him start to stumble, I ran off."

The teams will meet again Jan. 16 and then not again unless they make it back to the Finals—a "three-quel" that would be the first in league history.

To remind their guests of what happened in June, the Cavs left a door propped open just down the hallway from Golden State's locker room where a large photo of James' game-changing, career-defining block of Andre Iguodala in Game 7 was on display.

The picture had been doctored with a Cavs championship ring taped over James' left index finger.

If there was any doubt that this game meant more than the other 81 to both squads and fan bases, Green took care of that in the opening minutes.

After being called for his second personal foul, Green stormed off the floor, cursing with every step on his way to the bench. Green, whose suspension from Game 5 of the Finals helped swing the series to Cleveland, was slapped with a technical and several of his teammates came over to calm him down before things got worse.

AP
Cleveland Cavaliers' Kyrie Irving (2) passes over Golden State Warriors' Stephen Curry (30) in the first half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, Dec. 25, 2016, in Cleveland.

Celtics 119, Knicks 114

In New York, when the New York Knicks tried to make a Christmas comeback, the Boston Celtics' response was strong and Smart.

Isaiah Thomas scored 27 points, Marcus Smart made a tiebreaking 3-pointer with 47 seconds left after Boston blew a late lead, and the Celtics beat New York 119-114 on Sunday.

The Knicks wiped out a late nine-point deficit with an out-of-nowhere 11-2 run in a little more than a minute, but Smart answered with his shot and Avery Bradley and Al Horford made big defensive plays afterward.

"We did a good job of just being calm and gutting out the win," Thomas said.

Jae Crowder and Kelly Olynyk each had 16 points for the Celtics, who won for the fifth time in six games.

Carmelo Anthony scored 29 points and Derrick Rose had 25 for the Knicks, who fell to 22-29 in their NBA-record 51 Christmas appearances.

Spurs 119, Bulls 100

In San Antonio, LaMarcus Aldridge had a season-high 33 points and San Antonio held on to beat Chicago after nearly blowing a hot start.

Kawhi Leonard added 25 points, 10 rebounds and four assists. Tony Parker had 13 points and eight assists.

Chicago rallied from a 20-point deficit to lead by three points midway through the third quarter but could not sustain the push, taking its third straight loss.

Thunder 112, Timberwolves 100

In Oklahoma City, Russell Westbrook had 31 points and 15 assists to help Oklahoma City beat Minnesota.

Westbrook had 10 assists in the second half to help Oklahoma City take control, although he fell short of becoming the first Thunder player to score at least 40 points in four straight games.

Steven Adams scored 22 points and Enes Kanter added 20 points for the Thunder, who shot 51.2 percent while winning their third straight.

Karl-Anthony Towns scored 26 points and Andrew Wiggins had 23 points for the Timberwolves. Minnesota had won three of five, including wins at Chicago and Atlanta.

Semaj Christon's 3-pointer at the halftime buzzer gave the Thunder a 57-53 lead.

Westbrook had 17 points at halftime, then made 4 for 6 shots and dished out five assists in the third quarter.

Lakers 111, Clippers 102

In Los Angeles, The Los Angeles Lakers feel like they've spent at least a month shorthanded due to injuries and weary from an extraordinarily grinding schedule.

When they finally found an opponent with even more ailments and exhaustion, the Lakers didn't waste the opportunity to snap an embarrassing rivalry losing streak.

Nick Young and Timofey Mozgov scored 19 points apiece and the Lakers ended their 11-game skid against the Los Angeles Clippers with a 111-102 victory Sunday night.

Lou Williams and D'Angelo Russell added 14 points each for the Lakers, who hadn't beaten their Staples Center co-tenants since opening night of the 2013-14 season. The streak was tied for the Lakers' longest against any team since moving to Los Angeles a half-century ago, and it was the Clippers' longest active winning streak against any opponent.

With Clippers cornerstones Blake Griffin and Chris Paul sidelined by injuries, the Lakers won with a season-high seven scorers in double digits.

WNBA offers players security app for safety overseas

NEW YORK (AP)—The WNBA is offering an assist to players trying to stay safe while traveling overseas.

The league has partnered with LiveSafe, a safety communications platform, to provide a mobile security app to its 60-plus players competing in Russia, Turkey, China and other countries this offseason. The app debuted this week and players are already signing up.

"This was a proactive effort to protect our players and secure their personal safety," WNBA President Lisa Borders said in a phone interview with The Associated Press. "Our partner in this endeavor is LiveSafe. It has multiple features and functionality. It's a real-time way for our players to ask for help and receive help in dangerous situations or threatening environments."

The app will allow the players to communicate directly with the league and its security team. It also can send security advisories and notifications to players when they're overseas, similar to what one might get from the state department.

Borders said that the league's security team has been working with LiveSafe on the app for a while, and that it was not in reaction to any specific threat to players.

"We live in a complicated time. We live in a global environment," Borders said. "These young women are some of the best athletes in the world. They are citizens of that same world. They experience cultures and conflicts in the world. We always want to make sure they are safe. They are our primary stakeholder in the league."

Indiana Fever star Marissa Coleman is in her third offseason playing in Turkey. Last January, she left the area near the Blue Mosque in Istanbul moments before a suicide bombing occurred there.

"A guy walked by yelling bomb! Bomb!" Coleman recalled. "We thought he was toying with us, so we left, and then my phone started buzzing. First thing I saw was a CNN update that there was a bomb outside the Blue Mosque."

She welcomes the league's security initiative.

"I think it's awesome. It's great the league is doing that and showing they care," Coleman said. "It does get scary over there. I'm home for the holidays, but the last 10 days before I came home we had three bombings and the assassination of the ambassador. It's good to know the WNBA is on top of things and that if we need to get out of there quick, we can."

Coleman said she's become more worried about her safety with more time in Turkey.

"I've seen the progression of how things are escalating. We stick out like sore thumbs. You can't avoid certain things, and it does make you nervous," Coleman said. "I'm very hyper aware, vigilant of my surroundings. You never know."

Seattle Storm forward Alysha Clark also has vast international playing experience, spending five years in Israel before heading to Turkey this year. She was happy to have the league offer help.

"I'm glad the WNBA has introduced a new app that offers real-time solutions to address security and communication needs for players competing internationally," she said. "It has certainly given us additional peace of mind."

Borders is proud that the WNBA is the first professional league to use the app to support its players outside the U.S.

LiveSafe is used by a few NFL and MLB stadiums. The company has been around for 3 1/2 years and allows organizations to customize within the platform.

"We are providing the software and platform," LiveSafe President and CEO Carolyn Parent said. "Mobile brings a whole level of convenience. If you don't know who to call or where do I go, the app and platform dynamically will know that. It will automatically route to the security team."

Chiefs rout Broncos 33-10 to keep AFC West title hopes alive

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—The Kansas City Chiefs knew before kickoff against Denver that they were going to the playoffs.

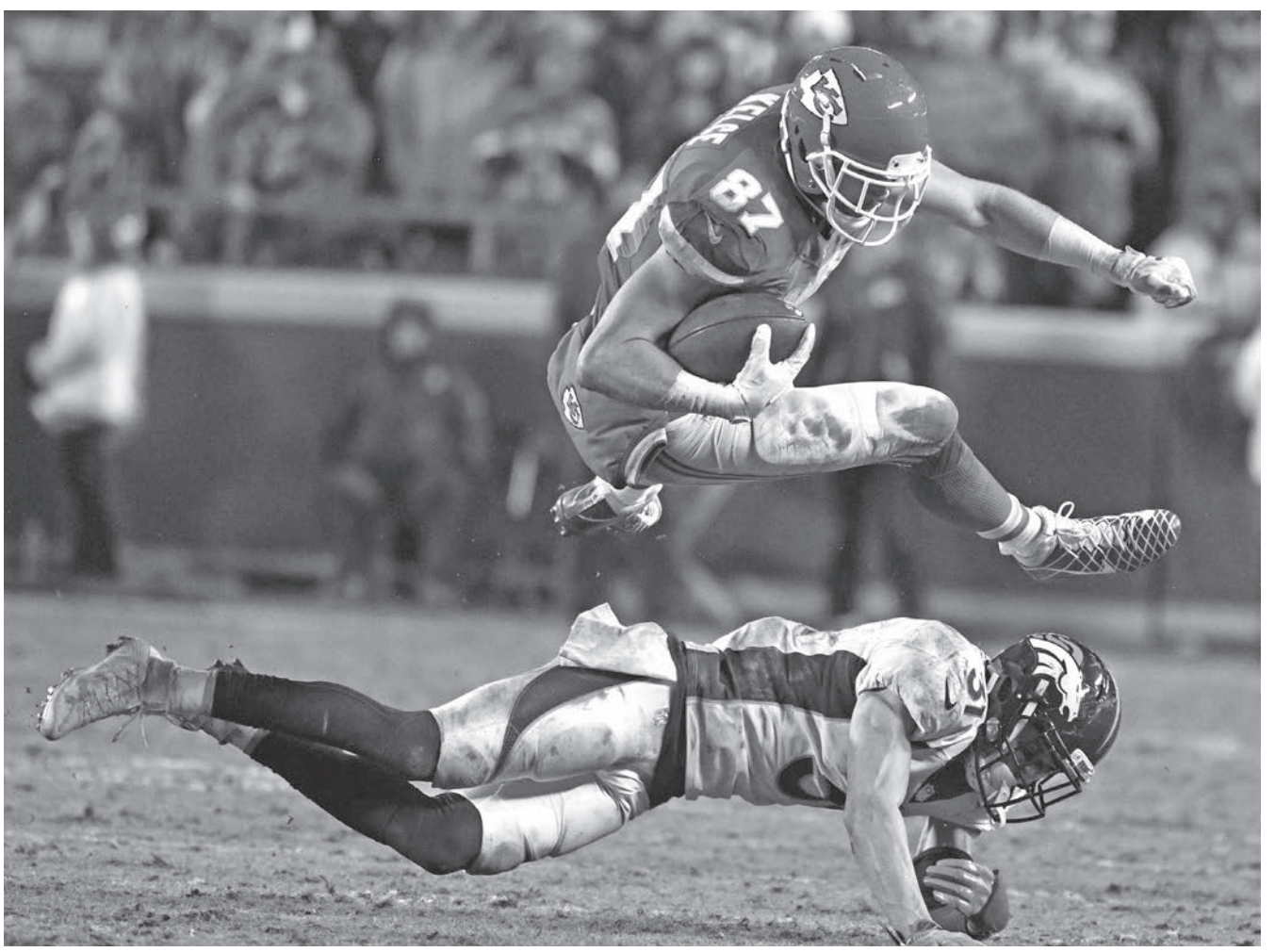
They proceeded to play as if they have much bigger goals.

Travis Kelce hauled in 11 catches for 160 yards and a touchdown, Tyreek Hill added a 70-yard TD run to his rookie highlight reel and the Chiefs routed the Broncos 33-10 to keep their AFC West title hopes alive on a soggy, sloppy Christmas night at Arrowhead Stadium.

"Unforgettable," said 346-pound defensive tackle Dontari Poe, summing up not only the night for Kansas City but also the way he punctuated it in style, lining up at quarterback and throwing a jump pass to tight end Demetrius Harris for a touchdown late in the game.

The Chiefs (11-4) were already assured of a wild card when Pittsburgh beat Baltimore earlier in the day. But a win next weekend in San Diego and an Oakland loss in Denver would give them the division title for the first time since 2010, not to mention a first-round bye and home playoff game.

"I give the guys a lot of credit for playing hard when they already clinched a playoff spot. That isn't easy to do," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said. "They came out and I really thought played aggressive."



AP

Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce (87) vaults Denver Broncos safety Justin Simmons (31) during the second half of an NFL football game in Kansas City, Mo., Sunday, Dec. 25, 2016.

Meanwhile, the Broncos (8-7) trudged through another inept offensive performance, this one costing the reigning Super Bowl champions an opportunity to keep their own postseason hopes alive.

Trevor Siemian was 17 of 43 for 183 yards and a game-ending interception, and the only TD drive he led came after a pick gave him the ball at the Kansas City 6. Justin Forsett scored two plays later.

The lackluster performance came one week after a dismal showing in a 16-3 loss to New England led to a locker room shouting match between the Denver offense and defense. The Broncos downplayed any kind of disharmony this week , but their performance Sunday night only seemed to underscore the rift.

"Next week is all geared toward next year and our football team moving forward," Denver coach Gary Kubiak said. "We need to finish on a positive note, but we need to move on to the next year."

Kansas City controlled the prime-time matchup from the opening bell.

Alex Smith capped a 77-yard touchdown march with a 10-yard keeper in the first quarter, and Hill out-ran the banged-up Broncos a few minutes later to give the Chiefs a 14-0 lead.

It was the fourth TD scored by Hill against the Broncos this season .

Forsett's touchdown gave the Broncos fleeting hope, but it was dashed moments later. Kelce took a screen pass and followed perfectly executed blocking for an 80-yard touchdown and a 21-7 lead.

"It felt good to see this offense come out, three possessions in a row and just move the ball," Hill said. "We know what we can do. We still haven't put it all together, but it's coming."

The Chiefs' defense took care of the rest, making it a festive night for their fans.

DENVER TAILSPIN

The Broncos were 7-3 when the teams met in November, but they blew an eight-point lead and wound up losing the game in overtime. That letdown started their downward spiral.

"I've thought about that for a few days," Kubiak said. "We could've came out of that game with a lot of confidence. We come out of the game, we don't get it done and it's been a struggle since then - especially offensively, it's been a struggle. Defensively, I think we've battled our tail off.

"We didn't play good tonight, but that's the NFL," he added. "Games here or there that you pull off and can play well and can propel you to great things and sometimes they don't go as well."

CLOSING SPEED

The biggest hit of the night came when a security guard tackled a fan that had run onto the field. Of course, it came after the fan already had run untouched about 90 yards, so in that respect, security wasn't a whole lot better than the Broncos' first-half defense.

SCARY MOMENT

Broncos cornerback Kayvon Webster was taken from the field on a cart after getting hit high by Chiefs linebacker Terrance Smith while covering a touchback in the second quarter. Webster's head was snapped back by the block, and he was being evaluated for a concussion. He did not return.

OTHER INJURIES

Broncos defensive end Derek Wolfe left in the first half with a neck injury and did not return. Denver was already without leading tackler T.J. Ward and tight ends Virgil Green and A.J. Derby because of concussions and linebacker Brandon Marshall because of a hamstring.

Chiefs running back Spencer Ware bruised his ribs late in the game and will have an MRI exam on Monday. He carried 13 times for 62 yards and caught two passes for 20 yards.

Dolphins earn 1st playoff berth since 2008 with Denver loss

MIAMI (AP)—Now that the Miami Dolphins are in the playoffs for the first time in eight years, they'll try to end an even longer drought.

They haven't won a postseason game since 2000.

The Dolphins clinched an AFC wild-card berth Sunday night when Denver lost to Kansas City 33-10. The Broncos' defeat, coupled with Miami's 34-31 overtime victory at Buffalo on Saturday, assured the Dolphins (10-5) of no worse than the sixth and final seed in the conference playoffs.

The Dolphins had Sunday off. At least some players watched the late-night Denver-Kansas City finish.

"Playoffs I See You," receiver Jarvis Landry tweeted shortly before the Broncos' game ended.

"It's only the beginning," linebacker Jelani Jenkins tweeted.

Miami's playoff berth comes in Adam Gase's first year as a head coach. The Dolphins have changed coaches seven times since Dave Wannstedt led them to their most recent postseason win.

Miami's first-round game in the playoffs will be at AFC South champion Houston or at AFC North champion Pittsburgh.

The Dolphins conclude the regular season at home Sunday against AFC East champion New England. The Patriots (13-2) are still battling for home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs.

Miami bounced back from a 1-4 start by winning nine of its past 10 games, including the last two with backup Matt Moore at quarterback.

The Dolphins are playoff-bound even though they have been outgained by 682 yards and have scored only four more points than their opponents this season. In games decided by a touchdown or less, they've won nine in a row, but they haven't beaten a team that's above .500 since Week 6.

None of that matters to long-suffering fans celebrating the Dolphins' first winning season since that 2008 playoff team. Miami hasn't been to the AFC championship game since the 1992 season, and last reached the Super Bowl in 1973.

Steelers win AFC North after rallying by Ravens, 31-27

PITTSBURGH (AP)—The Pittsburgh Steelers rode Ben Roethlisberger's right arm and Antonio Brown's left arm to the AFC North title.

Roethlisberger shook off a pair of interceptions to throw two late touchdowns, including a 4-yard strike to Brown with 9 seconds remaining to lift the Steelers to a 31-27 victory over the Baltimore Ravens on Sunday night. Brown caught Roethlisberger's pass just short of the goal line and stretched the ball into the end zone with his left hand to cap a wild fourth quarter and give Pittsburgh (10-5) its second division title in three years.

The Ravens took the lead on Kyle Juszczyk's 10-yard burst up the middle with 1:18 remaining. But Roethlisberger calmly led the Steelers 75 yards in 10 plays, the last 4 coming as Brown fought through a pair of tacklers to assure the Steelers of a third straight playoff berth.

"Right before we went out," Brown said, "we said, 'Let's get the game-winning touchdown and get out of here.' "

The Ravens (8-7) were officially eliminated when Joe Flacco's pass near midfield was intercepted on the final play.

Kansas City secured a playoff berth with the Baltimore loss.

The Steelers have won six straight and ended a four-game losing streak to Baltimore.

Roethlisberger finished with 279 yards passing and three touchdowns to overcome two third-quarter interceptions. Those picks allowed the Ravens to take a 20-10 lead on Justin Tucker's fourth field goal with 14:21 to play.

Brown caught 10 passes for 96 yards to join Hall of Famer Marvin Harrison as the only players with four straight seasons with at least 100 receptions.

Le'Veon Bell ran for 122 yards and a 7-yard touchdown that kick-started Pittsburgh's rally during a fourth quarter that featured 31 combined points and three lead changes in the final 7:16.

Flacco passed for 262 yards, including a pretty 18-yard dart to Steve Smith that put Baltimore up 14-10 early in the third quarter. Smith ended up with seven receptions for 79 yards, but the Ravens crumbled late. Their defense put up little resistance as Roethlisberger clinically got his team in position to get back to the playoffs.

It's a destination that seemed to be disappearing right in front of Pittsburgh's eyes in the third quarter. Roethlisberger threw a pair of interceptions deep in Pittsburgh territory—both poorly thrown balls to heavily covered targets—that helped the Ravens take control.

"I kind of dug ourselves a hole," Roethlisberger said. "I take all that blame. We never quit and never gave up. Guys fought back."

Indeed, with a season once filled with such promise slipping away, the Steelers turned to their three big stars. They all came through.

Source: Indians, Encarnacion agree to $60M, 3-year deal

CLEVELAND (AP)—The Cleveland Indians swung for the free-agent fences and connected: Edwin Encarnacion is joining the AL champions.

Capping a year in which they came within one victory of winning the World Series for the first time since 1948, the Indians agreed to terms with the veteran slugger on a $60 million, three-year contract Thursday night.

The deal includes a club option for 2020 that, if exercised, would make it worth $80 million over four years.

The agreement is contingent upon Encarnacion passing a physical, two people familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press. They spoke on condition of anonymity because the team had not made an announcement.

The physical is not expected to take place until after the holidays.

One of baseball's most feared power hitters, Encarnacion had 42 home runs and 127 RBIs last season for the Toronto Blue Jays, who lost to Cleveland in the AL Championship Series. Over the past five seasons, he's averaged 39 homers and 110 RBIs in 145 games.

A three-time All-Star who also was pursued by Oakland this week, Encarnacion tied for the AL lead in RBIs this year and split time between designated hitter and first base.

He could have a similar role with the Indians, sharing those two spots with Carlos Santana, who can become a free agent after next season.

Encarnacion, who turns 34 next month, reportedly turned down a four-year offer from Toronto worth at least $80 million before hitting the open market. The Indians swooped in and worked out a deal to bring in a player who could help put them back in position to end their championship drought.

Cleveland knocked off Boston and Toronto in the playoffs and jumped out to a 3-1 lead in the Series before the Chicago Cubs rallied to win in seven games and capture their first title in 108 years.

The close call convinced the Indians the time was right to spend, and they've shelled out money for one of the biggest bats available this winter.

Encarnacion's signing means the Indians will no longer pursue free agent first baseman Mike Napoli, who signed with Cleveland last winter and was a major part of the team's run to its first AL Central title since 2007.

Napoli reached career bests in homers (34) and RBIs (101), and finally gave Cleveland a much-needed power bat from the right side. He also provided clubhouse leadership, serving as a mentor to Cleveland's young players. However, he struggled in the postseason and the Indians were not willing to give him a multiyear deal. They did not give him a one-year qualifying offer of $17.2 million, either.

Encarnacion is an upgrade.

His departure from Toronto after eight seasons is a major move for Cleveland, which overcame injuries under manager Terry Francona to get to the World Series for the first time since 1997 and doesn't want to endure another long wait.

Already with one of baseball's best pitching staffs, the Indians now have a much more dangerous lineup. They've got young stars in second baseman Jason Kipnis and shortstop Francisco Lindor, and if left fielder Michael Brantley can bounce back from a shoulder injury that sidelined him for all but 11 games last season, the top of Cleveland's order is as good as anyone's.

It's a bold move by Indians owner Paul Dolan, who has been hesitant to test free-agent waters in recent years after major signings of previous veterans like Nick Swisher and Michael Bourn didn't pan out. But the Indians felt the time was right to act, especially with a bump in revenue from the 2016 postseason and adding new minority owner John Sherman.

Cleveland's lagging attendance—the Indians ranked 28th in the majors—will also get a big bump from Encarnacion's signing, which is being greeted by Cleveland fans as an early Christmas present.

Marlins finalize $16M, 2-year deal with pitcher Brad Ziegler

MIAMI (AP)—The Marlins sealed a deal Friday with right-hander Brad Ziegler, their latest move in an attempt to emulate recent playoff teams by building a strong bullpen.

Ziegler reached an agreement last week on the $16 million, two-year contract, which became final after he passed a physical. Miami also gave right-hander Junichi Tazawa a $12 million, two-year contract.

Incumbent closer A.J. Ramos will remain in that job, with Ziegler assuming a setup role, president of baseball operations Michael Hill said.

"We've been able to add two good pieces to an already strong bullpen," Hill said.

Miami is hoping a deep relief corps will give manager Don Mattingly lots of options to help compensate for a rotation weakened by the loss of ace Jose Fernandez, killed in a boating accident in September.

"We've seen over the past few years, with Kansas City and the playoffs this year, that if you do have a dominant bullpen, the manager and his staff feel comfortable going to the bullpen at any point to shorten the game," Hill said. "You saw in the playoffs it was as early as the fourth or fifth inning. We wanted to give Donnie as many weapons as possible to potentially shorten the game."

Ziegler is a nine-year veteran with a career ERA of 2.44 and 85 saves. He has pitched for three teams, including Arizona and Boston last year.

Left-hander Elvis Araujo was designated for assignment and plans to play in Japan for the Chunichi Dragons.

WELCH

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freestyle 57.65/59.25 seconds; 50m breaststroke 32.70/37.85 seconds; and 100m IM 1:06.25/1.12.76.

"It was a great experience. Seeing all the fastest swimmers from different countries is something I will not forget. Even warming up with them in the same lane made me feel like I was a part of them, like a herd of fish, except I was the turtle. The Canadian people are very welcoming. It's almost felt like I never left home," said Welch, who was joined in the Dec. 6 to 11 tournament Windsor Family Credit Union Centre in Ontario by fellow swimmers Christian Villacrusis and Angel De Jesus and coach Jacoby Winkfield.

He was happy with his times and his Top 3 finishes (on his heat) in the 100m freestyle and 50m breaststroke events.

"The pressure was turned up, with all these fast swimmers. Nobody wants to be the runt in the pack," said Welch, who likely had his first and last World Championships stint as he is now in Utah on another "mission" after accomplishing one in Canada.

"I'm in Utah, American Fork about 30 minutes south from Salt Lake. I am not studying. I am preparing for a mission for my church. After two years, I will continue my education," he said.

Since he will not be able to swim for the Commonwealth and SSC, the 18-year-old athlete would like to thank the individuals who helped him become a better swimmer.

"I am glad I had coaches (Jacoby Winkfield and Gary de Guzman) for the almost two years I've been swimming for SSC. I would like to thank them for putting much dedication into the swim teams without receiving much in return for their services and for being a good example for us swimmers," Welch said.

For his fellow swimmers, he encouraged them be patient.

"Just keep swimming, even if they feel like they are not improving their times. It'll all pay off in time," he said.

MALO

From Page 28

Pascual, Aleyzeus Angeles, Jamin Elliot, Erlynn Sablan, Joannah Carreon, and Khristelle Itaas.

Meanwhile, the third and last game in the U16 division had Joseph Rasa's Team and Evan FC settling for a draw.

Eunsyu Hahn, Oliver Lee, and Edwin Kim registered one goal apiece for Evan FC, which also has Rintaro Miyawaki, Go Sekiguchi, Jerlynn Castillo, Therize Millare, Jon Villagomez, Rinto Takahashi, and Katherine Magat on its roster.

Joseph Rasa's Team, on the other hand, is made up of Jhoey Noble, Sebastian Manabat, and Audre Camacho, Leisha Sally, Tom Benavente, Joseph Rasa, Patricia Surima, Jason Quimzon, Brandon Dela Cruz, Tyrese Camacho, and Ethan Salavaria. Noble, Manabat, and Audrew Camacho logged one goal apiece for Joseph Rasa's Team.

Besides the co-ed U16 division matches, three games in the co-ed U12 age group were also played in the opener of the futsal tournament and results will be reported in *Saipan Tribune*'s Wednesday edition.

ROLLERS

From Page 28

ders crew in the first half after he knocked in 10 points. Coby Santos, Dean Blake, and John Ichihara added 8 points apiece to give the Ol'Aces Extreme 2 a commanding 29-point lead.

It was still an Ol'Aces Extreme 2 show in the second half, as 670 Thunders' offense turned from bad into worse with the former making only 4 points off Parsley Linaogo's two field goals.

Blake top-scored for the Ol'Aces Extreme 2 with his 18 points, while Ichihara and Santos also finished in twin digits with 16 and 12, respectively. Only Linaogo made more than one field goal for the hapless 670 Thunders.

Meanwhile, four more games—two each in the women's division and men's under 25 age group—were played in the opening day of the Tan Holdings holiday caging.

First Game

Ol'Aces 85 — Blake 18, Ichihara 16, Santos 12, Ngirarois 10, Deleon Guerrero 7, Lizama 7, Reyes 7, Quitugua 4, Johnny 3.

670 Thunders 15 — Linaogo 4, Caruana 3, Ruiz 2, Bravo 2, Litusquen 2, Favor.

Scoring by halves: 40-11, 85-15.

Second Game

Rollers 1 72 — Cobacha 16, Quitugua 13, Tengco 13, Hudkins 6, Factor 6, Richardson 4, Valencia 4, Mendiola 4, Dela Cruz 4.

Rollers 2 32 — Duenas 10, Fabia 8, Agulto 6, Fitial 4, Kim 4.

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New York	16	14	.533	5½
Philadelphia	7	22	.241	14
Brooklyn	7	22	.241	14

Southeast Division

Charlotte	17	13	.567	—
Atlanta	15	15	.500	2
Washington	13	16	.448	3½
Orlando	14	18	.438	4
Miami	10	21	.323	7½

Central Division

Cleveland	23	6	.793	—
Milwaukee	14	14	.500	8½
Indiana	15	16	.484	9
Chicago	14	16	.467	9½
Detroit	14	18	.438	10½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	25	6	.806	—
Houston	22	9	.710	3
Memphis	20	12	.625	5½
New Orleans	11	21	.344	14½
Dallas	9	21	.300	15½

Northwest Division

Oklahoma City	19	12	.613	—
Utah	18	13	.581	1
Portland	13	19	.406	6½
Denver	12	18	.400	6½
Minnesota	9	21	.300	9½

Pacific Division

Golden State	27	5	.844	—
L.A. Clippers	22	10	.688	5
Sacramento	13	17	.433	13
L.A. Lakers	12	22	.353	16
Phoenix	9	21	.300	17

NBA LEADERS

Scoring

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Westbrook, OKC	31	324	277	984	31.7
Davis, NOR	30	318	236	891	29.7
Cousins, SAC	29	288	215	843	29.1
DeRozan, TOR	29	290	212	805	27.8
Harden, HOU	31	249	258	849	27.4
Lillard, POR	32	280	223	865	27.0
Thomas, BOS	27	226	211	728	27.0
Durant, GOL	32	295	188	838	26.2
James, CLE	27	255	128	688	25.5
Leonard, SAN	31	247	202	755	24.4
Butler, CHI	30	228	238	728	24.3
Curry, GOL	32	250	152	772	24.1
Irving, CLE	27	240	100	644	23.9
Wall, WAS	27	229	144	634	23.5
Antetokounmpo, MIL	28	234	168	656	23.4
Anthony, NYK	29	234	132	659	22.7
Walker, CHA	29	233	110	654	22.6
Towns, MIN	30	254	121	666	22.2
Beal, WAS	26	199	107	577	22.2
Hayward, UTA	24	170	146	528	22.0

FG Percentage

	FG	FGA	PCT
Gobert, UTA	134	192	.698
Jordan, LAC	141	214	.659
Capela, HOU	151	236	.640
Howard, ATL	146	231	.632
Adams, OKC	148	250	.592
Zeller, CHA	114	196	.582
Gortat, WAS	146	253	.577
Jokic, DEN	124	215	.577
Kanter, OKC	159	282	.564
Plumlee, POR	145	258	.562

Rebounds

	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Whiteside, MIA	31	131	330	461	14.9
Drummond, DET	31	117	299	416	13.4
Howard, ATL	26	121	218	339	13.0
Jordan, LAC	32	107	307	414	12.9
Gobert, UTA	31	95	274	369	11.9
Gortat, WAS	29	94	242	336	11.6
Chandler, PHX	22	68	186	254	11.5
Davis, NOR	30	63	283	346	11.5
Towns, MIN	30	102	237	339	11.3
Love, CLE	26	62	215	277	10.7

Assists

	G	AST	AVG
Harden, HOU	31	369	11.9
Westbrook, OKC	31	338	10.9
Wall, WAS	27	261	9.7
Paul, LAC	30	288	9.6
James, CLE	27	231	8.6
Lowry, TOR	29	212	7.3
Teague, IND	31	226	7.3
Green, GOL	30	218	7.3
Rondo, CHI	26	188	7.2
Frazier, NOR	31	220	7.1

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-New England	13	2	0	.867	406	236
Miami	10	5	0	.667	349	345
Buffalo	7	8	0	.467	389	348
N.Y. Jets	4	11	0	.267	245	399

South

y-Houston	9	6	0	.600	262	304
Tennessee	8	7	0	.533	357	361
Indianapolis	7	8	0	.467	387	372
Jacksonville	3	12	0	.200	298	376

North

y-Pittsburgh	10	5	0	.667	372	303
Baltimore	8	7	0	.533	333	294
Cincinnati	5	9	1	.367	298	305
Cleveland	1	14	0	.067	240	425

West

x-Oakland	12	3	0	.800	410	361
x-Kansas City	11	4	0	.733	352	284
Denver	8	7	0	.533	309	291
San Diego	5	10	0	.333	383	386

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

y-Dallas	12	2	0	.857	366	258
x-N.Y. Giants	10	5	0	.667	291	274
Washington	8	6	1	.567	386	364
Philadelphia	6	9	0	.400	340	318

South

y-Atlanta	10	5	0	.667	502	374
Tampa Bay	8	7	0	.533	337	353
New Orleans	7	8	0	.467	437	416
Carolina	6	9	0	.400	353	385

North

Detroit	9	5	0	.643	301	285
Green Bay	9	6	0	.600	401	364
Minnesota	7	8	0	.467	289	297
Chicago	3	12	0	.200	269	361

West

y-Seattle	9	5	1	.633	329	269
Arizona	6	8	1	.433	374	356
Los Angeles	4	11	0	.267	218	350
San Francisco	2	13	0	.133	286	455

x-clinched playoff spot
y-clinched division

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

2016 Wellness Through Basketball Tournament

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Chacha Oceanview Middle School's Jay Art Palmes saves the ball from going out toward the baseline, while Hopwood Junior High School's Peterson Franis tries to avoid hitting the former during the third quarter of their title game in the boys 7th/8th grade division of the 2016 Wellness Through Basketball Tournament last week at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

A Chacha Oceanview Middle School player is gun shy as he faces a Hopwood Junior High School defender.

Hopwood Junior High School's Albert Atan, right, and Chacha Oceanview Middle School's Jay Art Palmes, center, battle for the rebound, while Donovan Babauta, left, looks on.

A Chacha Oceanview Middle School player drives against his Hopwood Junior High School defender.

Chacha Oceanview Middle School's Matthew Carlos, left, dribbles past Hopwood Junior High School's Derek Reyes.

Hopwood Junior High School's Albert Atan scoops one in.

Hopwood Junior High School's Derek Reyes dribbles out of two Chacha Oceanview Middle School defenders.

Chacha Oceanview Middle School's Sean Rabauliman, right, pulls up for a shot against a Hopwood Junior High School defender.

Irving clutch against Warriors again as Cavs win

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Chiefs rout Broncos 33-10 to keep AFC West title hopes alive

PAGE 25

Rollers 1, Ol'Aces Extreme 2 clobber foes

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Ol'Aces Extreme 2 and Rollers 1 proved to be too much for their respective opponents as shown in the lopsided victories they posted during the opening of the 2016 TanHoldings Christmas Basketball Tournament yesterday at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

In the first game in the boys U16 division, the Ol'Aces Extreme 2 crushed the 670 Thunders, 85-15, while in the second match in the same age group, Rollers 1 eased past Rollers 2, 72-32.

Rollers 1 pulled away at the halfway mark of the second half, turning an 8-point lead (38-28) to a 40-point winning margin, as Jude Tengco and Emmanuel Cobacha alternately hit baskets for the victorious squad. Cobacha knocked in 12 of his 16 points in the breakaway, while Tengco had 10 of his 13 markers in that run.

Earlier in the first half, it was Jelbert Quitugua who stood out for Rollers 1, as he made 11 of his 13 points in the opening 20 minutes of play. Quitugua, Tengco, and Cobacha could have scored more, but Rollers 1 decided to use its second stringers in the homestretch as the victory was already secured. Six other Rollers 1 players also contributed to the team's strong offense, while only Patrick Duenas broke into double figures for Rollers 2 with his 10 markers.

In the first game, the Ol'Aces Extreme 2 had the game in the bag right at the end of the first half as it enjoyed a 40-11 halftime advantage.

Troy Ngirarois nearly outgunned the entire 670 Thun-

See ROLLERS on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Rollers 2's Jeremy Agulto, center, has nowhere to go against the defense of Rollers 1's Angelo Factor, left, and A.J. Hudkins during the second half of their boys U16 division game in the TanHoldings holiday caging yesterday at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

Malo Fatu, Astig cruise to wins

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Evan FC's Rintaro Miyawaki, right, closes in on a player from Joseph Rasa's Team during the second half of their co-ed U16 division match in the 2016 SSS Christmas Youth Futsal Tournament yesterday at the TSL Sports Complex.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Malo Fatu and Astig got off to a rousing start in the 2016 Christmas Youth Futsal Tournament organized by the Saipan Soccer School.

Astig whipped Kanoa, 13-1, in the first game in the co-ed U16 division at the TSL Sports Complex, while Malo Fatu had a similar easy victory over Betde in the second match, 8-1.

Louie Calayag and Angel Sally scored three goals apiece for Astig, which drew two goals each from James Ermitanio, Alan Hinson, and Podziewski. Gillian Villagomez complete the scorers list for Astig, adding one goal. Other members of the Ryan Relucio-coached Astig are goalie John Bucayo, Jonathan Capayas, Anthony Fruit, and Anela Duenas.

Ian Maniago drilled the lone goal for Kanoa. Joining Maniago on the Kanoa roster are Bren Azarcon, Ericka Santiago, Princess Alcantara, Hannah Santos, Kiara Manganti, Brian Lubao, and Jaydee Jose.

In the second game, John Michael Rojas towed Malo Fatu to the win against Betde after firing five goals. Krizel Tuazon contributed two, while Kirt Andon tallied one. Also on Malo Fatu's lineup are Katrina Costales, Thaiphi Austria, Paulyn Joyce, Terrence Belcher, and Andruw Omelau.

Taka Borja leads Betde's roster and he recorded the team's lone goal against Malo Fatu. Other members of the Batde are Taka's younger brother Ichiro, Mark Esalan, John Paul Cruz, John Guiller and John Ezekiel Canape, Reginald

See MALO on Page 26

Welch 'perfect' in World Champs debut

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI's Salofi Welch had a remarkable performance in the 13th FINA World Swimming Championships in Windsor, Canada early this month as he crushed his entry records in all nine events.

The Saipan Swim Club standout started his perfect run in his world championships debut with an impressive swim in the 200m individual medley as he clocked in at 2:32.17—surpassing his entry time (2.38.59) by more than six seconds. He had the same achievement in the 100m breaststroke (to 1:66.55 from 1.23.29); 100m butterfly (1:09.66/ 1.09.90); 200m freestyle (2:10.87/2.15.36); 50m freestyle 26.17 /27.21 seconds); 50m butterfly 28.67/35.91 seconds); 100m

See WELCH on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Salofi Welch does the butterfly stroke of the 200m individual medley race in a local competition early this year. He represented the CNMI in the 13th FINA World Swimming Championships held in Canada from Dec. 6 to 11.